

**AVOIDING MINISTRY BURNOUT:  
A CURRICULUM OF PREVENTIVE SELF-CARE FOR  
SMALL GROUP LEADERS**

**SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

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**MAY 2007**



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who have made this thesis study possible. I can only mention those whose immediate interest and support brought it to its conclusion. Without the spoken and unspoken encouragement of my wife Judy, this thesis would have been considerably more difficult, if not impossible. My wife's patience and support not only allowed me to concentrate in this project, but soothed the anxiety and made this journey less intolerable. The keen editor's eye from Esther L. Hsu was invaluable. I am grateful to her careful reading and thoughtful suggestions that brought enrichment to this thesis. I pray the Lord will heal you and continue to use you as a vessel of blessing in a unique way with your counseling gift. Rebecca L. Wen, to whom I owe my gratitude, also assisted this project by contributing her editing expertise, refreshing comments, and warm encouragement. Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to the Executive Board and the Pulpit Committee of Rutgers Community Christian Church in Somerset, New Jersey. Their generous support and encouragement allowed me to embark in a journey of learning and growth.

*Soli Deo gloria.*

This thesis project is dedicated to my wife Judy.

## **ABSTRACT**

Ministry in the church today is complicated and specialized. Generally, the caring aspect of ministry usually rests on a group of small group leaders. They become the specialists whose task is to take care of the well-being of their group members. The training and equipping of small group leaders usually focuses on the skills of handling ministry situations in group management, dynamics, life stages of small groups, personnel, and discipleship, etc. However, the stress and its effect on a small group leader are often neglected. This thesis project attempts to address the need of proper self-care for small group leaders in their demanding and stressful life from the following aspects: to acknowledge and identify leadership dysfunctions; to build a healthy foundation of self-care by cultivating three attitudinal qualities that are rooted in the grace of God; and to develop a plan and managing skills that can foster personal growth. The final product of this project is in the format of an annotated PowerPoint curriculum that can be implemented by a facilitator.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING**

Leroy<sup>1</sup> works on Wall Street in New York City. His commute consists of riding a commuter bus and taking the subway to work and back home. He spends about three hours in traffic everyday. Ever since he moved to New Jersey 10 years ago, Leroy has been faithfully serving as a small group leader at Rutgers Community Christian Church (RCCC). Every week he prepares his Bible pre-study in advance before the small group meeting on Friday. Moreover, he consistently calls everyone in his group on a regular basis to provide personal care and to build meaningful relationships. Leroy also opens his home for small group meetings every Friday evening. In addition, he regularly attends Sunday school classes to equip himself.

Despite Leroy's effort to equip himself and care for everyone in his group, there are still some difficult situations and people that constantly drain his joy and emotional energy. For example, there was a young couple whose marital conflict had become common knowledge to everyone in the group. For years, the pastoral staff and many others in the church had been involved in mediating their conflict but to no avail.

Leroy, on one hand, felt obligated to help this couple as their small group leader. But on the other hand, as he lovingly assisted this couple, he became extremely frustrated as his advice, which came from good intentions, often fell on deaf ears. Another difficult

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<sup>1</sup> Names and details in this project have been altered to protect confidentiality.

situation and person that challenged Leroy was an older gentleman in Leroy's group who had previously attended a local seminary program. This older brother would often distract the Bible study time by interjecting with liberal comments and interpretations of Bible passages without proper discernment, stirring up debates, and causing confusion among the new believers in the group. As a result, Leroy was upset with this situation.

These situations and difficult people Leroy encounters as he serves the small group have made him extremely fatigued and weary. He often finds himself searching desperately for an extra ounce of energy to get through the day. On top of everything, Leroy's wife is pregnant with their fourth child. With three young children and one more on the way, Leroy feels submerged by the needs of his children and wife when he returns home from work every evening even before tending to the needs of the small group. With each passing day, Leroy senses an increasing frustration about his ministry as well as his family life. Leroy has asked more than once to be released from his ministry role as a small group leader. Although his group has around twenty consistent members, no one in his group is willing to step up to replace him as the group leader. Leroy feels disappointed that no help is in sight and guilty about his desire to quit. Consequently, he continues to serve as the leader despite his frustration and reluctance. Every Friday morning is a dreadful time for Leroy, for he can foresee



the struggles that he will soon face in the small group that same evening after an already long day of work and tiring commute. To Leroy, perhaps the most depressing fact is that there seems to be no foreseeable end to this struggle and exhaustion.

One evening, I received a phone call informing me that Leroy was sent to the Emergency Room in New York City and received 5 stitches on his forehead. During the evening rush hour that day, Leroy fainted in the subway platform while waiting for his train to arrive. His forehead hit the pavement of the platform when he fell down and he lost consciousness momentarily. Thank God a good samaritan took the time to call 911 and care for him until an ambulance arrived. He returned home quite late that evening after receiving necessary medical care in the Emergency Room.

Harvey has been a small group leader at RCCC for almost a decade. His group meets every Friday evening from eight pm to late into the night. He views himself as the center of stability for the group, and works hard to measure up to that expectation. He dominates the discussion during Bible studies, and believes that he should always provide the “correct” answer to all Biblical questions.

Harvey used to work for a large financial institute in New Jersey. Unfortunately, when the economy took a down turn after the tragedy of September 11 a couple of years ago, Harvey was laid off by his bank. At that time he had also just purchased a

larger house. With the increased mortgage and no job, he and his wife went through some stormy times. Even though few people in their church knew about their struggles, Harvey still felt embarrassed by his personal situation because he was regarded as one of the more mature and reliable coworkers who has been a longtime church member. Therefore, Harvey dealt with his problem privately and tried hard to appear normal at church. Despite all his personal struggles with his health, his marriage, and heavy financial burdens, Harvey continued to volunteer his help in different church ministries. As time went on, the stressors in Harvey's life made him suffer physically. After several months he experienced shortness of breath and palpitations. However, he did not really pay serious attention to it until his wife urged him to make an appointment with his family doctor for a check up. His family doctor recently referred him a cardiologist. The cardiologist gave Harvey a cardio stress test and the results indicated that his heart does not have any serious problems. However, his cardiologist suggested that he see a professional counselor and reexamine his busy schedule.

To Harvey's delight, he found a new job within half a year after his layoff and his financial situation improved considerably. He was then able to afford the monthly mortgage for his new house and the perspective of a new job made him believe that things were going well in his life again and that he should continue with his current

way of handling his personal problems. Harvey even signed up for a summer short term mission team to go to an East European country. As Harvey continued to masquerade as a well balanced individual, he felt torn by the superficial image he tried to maintain and the increasing internal turmoil and conflict in his daily life. His wife expressed her continual dissatisfaction with the lack of communication in their relationship and the heavy burden of always having to keep up the façade of a “happy family.”

Finally, after taking the cardiologist’s advice of seeking help with professional counseling, Harvey realized that he needed a change in his life style. He realized that his body was reacting to the stress build up from not only a highly demanding job, but also the emotional stress and internal conflict of maintaining the ideal Christian image. He discovered that the more he pretended, the more this unhealthy pattern consumed him emotionally. As a consequence, he became short tempered and found no joy in serving God and others. After a long decision making process, Harvey decided not to go on the short term mission’s trip to Europe.

Jane is a homemaker. Her husband has worked for an Information Technology company for many years. However, due to the recent trend of downsizing and outsourcing, his job security has been greatly threatened. Jane also took on a part time

job as an online sales assistant of a small start-up company. She enjoyed the fact that her boss allowed her to work from home for the majority of her work hours which allowed her more flexibility. Jane has two children, one in high school and the other in middle school. Most of Jane's weekday afternoons are occupied by driving her children to different extra-curricular activities. Jane also serves as the leader of a Tuesday morning women's Bible study group.

Jane enjoys serving the church. She volunteered to be the women's group leader two years ago when no one was willing to serve. However, lately she struggles with fatigue and a deep sense of guilt resulting from her relations with several new members from the group and her heavy responsibility load. There are several elderly women in her group who do not drive. Jane and her co-leaders have been offering them weekly rides to the group meetings and those rides have since developed into weekly shopping rides to nearby supermarkets and grocery stores. On top of the hectic schedule of driving her children to various after-school-activities, Jane felt that she was constantly on the road and often rushed from one task to another. To further complicate the matter, a few of the elderly women requested a different afternoon for their shopping trips for their own convenience. These shopping trips often dragged on for more than two hours. Consequently, Jane felt trapped in the situation and her resentment toward the elderly women grew deeper everyday.

To make things even worse, Jane's husband was finally laid off by his company. After several weeks of job searching, Jane's husband found a job in St. Louis. With their family's financial needs in mind, her husband decided to rent a small room in St. Louis while he works there. He then began to travel back to New Jersey on weekends to be with his family. This new transition and arrangement produced great stress on their family. As stress from Jane's personal and family life intensified and her resentment towards the elderly women in her group deepened, Jane lost her passion for serving the women's group. She became cynical and bitter. Furthermore, Jane felt a great sense of loneliness from being separated from her husband most of the time and a great sense of anger towards life she had never felt before.

People like Leroy, Harvey, and Jane are not uncommon in today's church. God's people oftentimes find themselves in the crossroad of life's demands. As individuals, we take on multiple roles everyday as parent, spouse, employee, and coworker in various aspects of church ministries. When unexpected events or crises arise, they upset our already delicate balance of these roles, and also cause tremendous stress on the quality of our daily lives.

Stress is prevalently and indiscriminately experienced by all in our modern life

styles. *Time* magazine's June 6, 1983 cover story called stress "The Epidemic of the Eighties" and the leading health problem of the country.<sup>2</sup> This situation actually has progressively worsened over the following decades. Many surveys and studies have shown that adult Americans think they are under more stress than ever. A 1996 *Prevention* magazine survey found that almost 75 percent of American adults feel they have "great stress" one day per week.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, more than one third of this group said they felt great stress more than twice a week. It has been estimated that 75 to 90 percent of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress related problems.<sup>4</sup> These surveys and studies were only based on two kinds of stressors: job and family. For people like Leroy, Harvey, and Jane the third source of stress comes from their role as a small group leader in the church ministry.

Ministry in the church today is complicated. Especially in a large church setting, the caring aspect of ministry usually rests on a group of small group leaders. They become the "specialists" whose task is to take care of the spiritual wellbeing of their group members. The group leader is generally required to conduct the regular fellowship meeting and watch over their members' spiritual development. However,

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<sup>2</sup> *Time* magazine, June 6, 1983 issue.

<sup>3</sup> American Institute of Stress on *Prevention Magazine* 1996 survey. Retrieved November 26, 2006 from: <http://www.stress.org/americas.htm?AIS=3eca3cdef544eca9ce2b922662569026>

<sup>4</sup> American Psychological Association (1997). How does stress affect us? APA HelpCenter. Retrieved November 26, 2006 from <http://www.apahelpcenter.org/articles/article.php?id=11>

oftentimes they find themselves torn among different aspects of their own life: the demands of their career, family, and ministry. On the ministry aspect, small group leaders often found themselves involved in the urgent needs of their members, such as finding a babysitter during someone's emergency, making hospital visitation when someone is sick, providing guidance when marital conflict arise, etc. With the increasing tendency of adopting the business culture of management and leadership into church ministry, effectiveness and efficiency are demanded from the small group leaders. Ministry accountability in the form of ministry effectiveness and efficiency evaluation brings ever greater stress upon small group leaders. As they struggle to juggle between their careers, family needs, and ministry demands, burnout among small group leaders is not uncommon.

The personality of a small group leader sometimes can also play an important role in ministry burnout. Personality traits such as perfectionism, achievement-oriented attitude, Type A personality, etc. in combination with high demands from all areas of life can have a devastating impact on a small group leader. "Burnout," is a term introduced by Herbert Freudenberger in his book titled, *Burnout: The High Cost of High Achievement*, in 1974. Freudenberger defines burnout as "the extinction of motivation or incentive, especially where one's devotion to a cause or relationship fails

to produce the desired results.”<sup>5</sup> Burnout is a result of an overstressed life style.

I serve as an associate pastor at Rutgers Community Christian Church (RCCC) in Somerset, New Jersey. Throughout its twenty five years of history, RCCC has grown from a church with just a handful of attendants to a church with two thousand active members and seven services on every weekend and Sunday. RCCC operates under a five-department executive board: the Education Department, the Mission Department, the Administration/Service Department, the Worship Department, and the Caring Department. Small group ministry is the main component of the Caring Department. Small group ministry serves as a crucial vehicle where vital community life with other believers in the church can happen. My responsibility as an associate pastor is to oversee the caring, training, and counseling of small group leaders in the church. It is my experience that most small group leaders, like Leroy, Jane, and Harvey, struggle alone at some point in their ministry with stress and frustration. A few get over their difficult times and move on; however, many stay in their struggle and become discouraged, depressed and burned out. By empathizing with their pain, I am hoping to seek an effective vehicle to help them prevent ministry burnout and serve Jesus Christ's church in a more healthy and positive way.

Burnout in ministry can take many forms. For some, they resign from their duty,

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<sup>5</sup> Herb Freudenberger, Herbert J. Freudenberger, and Geraldine Richelson, *Burnout: The High Cost of High Achievement* (New York: Bantem Books, 1981), 160



lose love and passion toward people and toward God, and some even enter into a spiritual depression. For others, they may continue to persevere and hang on to their position but end up losing the passion to serve others. They become callous, withdrawn, bitter, cynical, and even angry. This internal struggle and turmoil resulting from burnout also threatens the stability of their own family relationships.

Most training and equipping of small group leaders usually focuses on the skills of handling ministry situations in group management and dynamics, life stages of small groups, organizing human resources, and discipleship, etc. However, the effect of stress on a small group leader and the equipping for stress management are often neglected. There is a critical question still waiting to be answered: **How can we help small group leaders face their ministry challenges more effectively and therefore prevent ministry burnout?** I will attempt to answer this question in the following chapters by examining a few Bible characters and their own struggles and the perspective the Bible offers on the issues of stress and ministry. A few important publications and resources will also be investigated and evaluated in order to form the project's outcome: a curriculum that would not only raise the awareness of self-care for small group leaders, but also offer practical suggestion to prevent ministry burnout of small group leaders.

This thesis will focus on the development of the curriculum; the evaluation of its

effectiveness will be dedicated for further future studies. It is designed to be a ten-section course organized in four units. Each section requires an average of three hours to cover, it totals about thirty hours of training. I plan to implement this curriculum in my church, Rutgers Community Christian Church, in the near future. My hope is that this curriculum will serve as a vehicle to liberate small group leaders like Leroy, Jane, and Harvey, from their anxiety and burden so that they can rediscover God's grace and joy in their lives.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF SELF-CARE IN MINISTRY

Before an airplane takes off, the flight attendant will always remind passengers without fail that how crucial it is for one to put on his or her own mask before helping others. The reason is being that while trying to help others, you could pass out from lack of air, and neither you nor the person dependent on you will be saved. By the same token, a care-giver in church ministry also has the responsibility to take care of his or her own physical, emotional, and spiritual needs prior to providing guidance and service to those who depend on him or her. Therefore, proper self-care is not a selfish act; rather, it is an essential quality for a faithful steward of God's grace. We can learn from many characters in the Bible whose lives demonstrated that the exercise of proper self-care can prevent ministry burnout and manage unbearable stress. On the other hand, ignoring one's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs can bring regrettable outcomes.

In Richard Swenson's book, *The Overload Syndrome*, paints an accurate picture of most small group leaders. Richard Swenson classified people who deal with stress problems into two categories: the *high productive person* and the *high sensitive person*.<sup>6</sup> A high productive person (HPP) is a highly effective, efficient, workaholic, purpose-driven, visionary, demanding, and performance-oriented person. A high

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<sup>6</sup> Richard A. Swenson, *Overload Syndrome* (Colorado Springs: Navpress. 1998), 31-32.

sensitive person (HSP), on the other hand, is a person who is sensitive to relationships, creative, and pays a high emotional price because of his or her sensitivity.

Unfortunately, these two styles of dealing with stress often portray the way small group leaders handle their responsibilities in the church ministry. A small group leader is demanded, whether by others or out of his or her expectation, to perform well in areas such as caring, leadership, and management. Since a small group leader spends most of his or her ministry time in relational issues, a small group leader can also become over-sensitive to the feelings and emotions of others. A small group leader who is placed under such circumstances may negatively affect his or her ability to manage stress and demands; therefore makes him or her susceptible to ministry burnout.

Ministry can be stressful. Serving God does not exempt us from the danger of overwhelming demands and requests from ministry. Burnout is a phenomenon that is increasingly becoming a serious problem among care-givers in the church ministry. No one is free from the threat of burnout no matter how devoted and dedicated one is. Not even the many Bible characters who were called by God to accomplish His divine will and purposes. They were highly productive people and accomplished great things for God. Although these Bible characters were strong in faith, none were exempt from the adversary and obstacles during their ministry. Some faced crisis that threatened not only their ministry, but also their own survival. Others even went into

depression.

As we will see from these examples, burnout in ministry is not uncommon when proper physical, emotional, and spiritual care is not in place. In this chapter, I will select a few characters from the Old Testament and the New Testament to examine their ministry, especially the vulnerable moments when they were subjected to tremendous stress and crisis in ministry. Some of them paid attention to their spiritual, emotional, and physical needs and therefore, sailed through the storm of swamping duties with a healthy attitude and solution. Others failed to attend to their own personal needs and fell into the trap of burnout and depression. Many characters in the Bible are worthy for this study, but for the scope of this thesis project, I will limit my selection to the following characters.

### **Moses**

Moses was a great leader who was used by God in a crucial period of Israel's history. Through his ministry, Israel's identity as a nation of God's chosen people was established. He led the Israelites out of slavery into a new freedom that marked the birth of a new nation.

The last forty years of Moses' life were devoted exclusively and entirely to leading Israel out of the slavery of Egypt to the promised land of Canaan. These latter years were by far the most difficult, demanding, frustrating, and exhausting part of Moses'

life. Moses' first forty years were lived as a member of the royal family of Egypt. He enjoyed a time of privilege and comfortable living. His second forty years were lived as a disheartened shepherd who tended a flock in the isolation of the wilderness. Although Moses lived a very simple, uncomplicated existence, his last forty years were an adventure in frustration and exasperation. Few have considered the depth of Moses' frustrations as he led the Israelites. Even though Moses was given the power to perform miracles to impress and convince both the Israelites and Pharaoh, he was not able to renew the minds of the Israelites after freeing them from slavery. Immediately after the miraculous deliverance, when the Israelites were trapped between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army, they did not turn toward God, their deliverer. Instead, they grumbled at Moses (Exodus 14: 11-12). Then, as the Israelites began their journey in the wilderness, they grumbled at Moses again about drinking water when they were thirsty and complained about food when they were hungry.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, while Moses was up on Mount Sinai receiving instruction from God, they rebelled by convincing Aaron to build a golden calf. Even Aaron and Miriam sided with the Israelites to challenge Moses' leadership. In addition, Korah led a rebellion, joined by Dathan and Abiram, against Moses. It is not easy to comprehend the frustration of Moses, but his conversation with God in Numbers 11: 11-15 gives us a glimpse of his

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<sup>7</sup> From chapters 14-17 in Exodus, the Israelites complained 5 times over the issue of drinking water and food supply.

desperation.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, Moses did not ask for God to kill the Israelites, but to kill him instead. In fact, Moses demonstrated this selfless attitude throughout his ministry. When Miriam challenged Moses' leadership and God punished her with leprosy, Moses prayed for her healing. When Israel built the golden calf as idol and God wanted to destroy the people, Moses interceded for the people. When the people refused to trust God to enter Canaan and God wanted to annihilate them once again, Moses pleaded for them.

Moses also experienced physical fatigue in his ministry. He was exhausted with the needs of the Israelites from morning to evening. It was not until his father-in-law, Jethro, suggested that Moses assign and delegate other coworkers to share his burden when he was finally released of this unbearable burden.

In his service to the Israelites, who complained about almost everything in every situation they encountered, Moses also paid a high emotional price.<sup>9</sup> Moses was attacked even by his own family, Miriam and Aaron, on his integrity and leadership.

Despite Moses' commitment to the Lord's calling and to the people he served, his

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<sup>8</sup> He asked the Lord, "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their forefathers? Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how you are going to treat me, put me to death right now if I have found favor in your eyes - and do not let me face my own ruin" (Numbers 11:11-15).

<sup>9</sup> Complaints of Israelites against Moses can be found in: Ex. 5:21; 15:24; 16:2, 3; Num. 16:2, 3, 13, 14, 41; 20:2-4. Complaints against God can be found in: Ex. 5:22, 23; Ex. 16:8, 12; Num. 14:26-37; Num. 17:10, 11.

ministry ended on a regrettable situation. By disobeying God, he was banned from entering the promise land. Although some puzzled over the severity of God's punishment upon Moses, it was obvious that Moses' emotional status was not balanced when the Israelites grumbled about the lack of drinking water at the Waters of Meribah, in the Desert of Zin (Numbers 20: 1-13). While he was instructed by God to speak to the rock so that it will pour out its water, Moses struck the rock with his staff instead in his angry response to the Israelites. It was an action that probably grew from years of resentment and frustration toward a group of ungrateful and rebellious people. Moses did not give proper attention to deal with this negative emotion. In turn, this negative emotion haunted him until the end of his ministry. Later on Moses recalled such a tragedy and said:

But because of you the Lord was angry with me and would not listen to me. "This is enough." The Lord said. "Do not speak to me anymore about this matter. Go up to the top of east. Look at the land with your own eyes, since you are not going to cross this Jordan. (Deuteronomy 3: 26-27)

What a sad ending to a life-long fruitful ministry! The lack of proper self-care of a servant of God can leave a devastating impact on his life and ministry.

## **Elijah**

Another powerful servant of God in the Old Testament is Elijah. Elijah was called into ministry during one of the most difficult and dangerous periods of the history of Israel, the Northern Kingdom. King Ahab and his wife Jezebel had done



“more to provoke the Lord, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him.” (1 King: 16:33) Elijah was called to speak the truth and to give warning, which eventually led to the intense confrontation between him and the prophets of Baal on the Mount Carmel. It was a dramatic and inspiring victory; the Lord miraculously used Elijah to demonstrate His supreme power and defeated the prophets of Baal. However, after the long and exhausted battle on Mount Carmel, Elijah’s life was immediately threatened by a defeated and angry Jezebel. In sharp contrast to his courage and dependence on the power of the Lord during the confrontation on Mount Carmel, Elijah was afraid and fled from Jezebel. Not only did he flee from Jezebel, Elijah was depressed. After a day’s journey into the desert he prayed that he might die.<sup>10</sup> Elijah was utterly at the end of his own courage and strength, and dejectedly confessed that in spite of all he did at Mount Carmel, he was no better than his ancestors. These were the words from a disheartened, exhausted, and depressed person. His intense confrontation with the pagan priests on Mount Carmel wore him out emotionally and physically. He did not have any energy left to face another day. Nevertheless, through a forty-day retreat into Horeb, the mountain of God, the Lord sent forth an angel to tend to his needs and restore his physical strength. Elijah’s doubts and complaints were answered by God. God asked him to anoint three people:

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<sup>10</sup> 1 Kings 19:3-5.

Hazael, whom would be the king of Aram; Jehu, whom would be the king replacing Ahab over Israel; and Elisha, whom would be the assistant and successor of Elijah. They were people God provided to solve the problem Elijah had faced. Furthermore, the Lord also revealed to Elijah that there were seven thousand in Israel that were loyal to the Lord. Elijah did not see all these provision because he was caught up with his unmet needs in his stressful ministry. Focusing the blame on other people and claiming the role of victim is an insidious form of anxiety. When our needs are not met properly, we tend to focus on the situation around us and develop destructive emotions. Elijah's experience teaches us that adequate care of one's physical need is crucial, for our physical condition will inevitably affect our emotional and spiritual balance.

## **Paul**

The apostle Paul is largely viewed as one of the most effective and strong followers of Christ in the New Testament. He almost single-handedly advanced the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the entire Roman Empire and built many churches. Paul also endured unimaginable hardships, prosecutions, misunderstandings, rejections, and physical abuse. In the second epistle to the Corinthians, Paul described about forty five different kinds of hardships he had experienced. Although Paul seemed to rise to a status of a super Christian, few gained insight from his epistles on the secret of

keeping his emotions at balance. Paul was free to feel and express his emotions and he quite liberally and openly shared them with his friends. Furthermore, Paul unreservedly admitted his weaknesses and accepted them as part of himself. He even said he would boast in his weakness so that Christ's strength may be revealed through his weakness.<sup>11</sup> In his letters in the New Testament, Paul expressed more than thirty kinds of different feelings with the majority of them being negative: fear, anxiety, shame, regret, anguish, humiliation, etc. The freedom to admit and accept these feelings was crucial to Paul's ability to maintain emotionally healthy in a high-stress ministry.

Paul was not immune from interpersonal conflicts either, but he did not run away from it. He had conflicts with Barnabas and Peter (Mark) but later in his letters, we can see the evidence that he grew from his early mistake and reconciled with them.<sup>12</sup>

Not only was Paul in touch with his emotions, he also surrounded himself with support of strong relationships with friends and coworkers. Through these precious friendships, Paul allowed his coworkers to minister to him in times of needs. For example, Onesiphorus refreshed Paul when he was in prison in Ephesus; Timothy, Titus, Phoebe, Silas, and even Mark comforted and strengthened Paul in time of great trials. In fact, Paul mentioned more than seventy people by their names in his letters who

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<sup>11</sup> 2 Cor. 11:29-30.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Tim. 4:11. Paul mentioned about Mark and commented that Mark was helpful to him in his ministry. See also Philemon 24.

were significant to him in some way.

Paul also took initiative of actions in situations that were out of his control. It was through those actions he regained a sense of emotional balance during times of devastation. When overwhelmed by anxiety about the unknown situation of the Thessalonians believers, Paul sent Timothy to check on them.<sup>13</sup> Another time in Troas the Lord opened the door for the Gospel, yet Paul couldn't find Titus there. Instead of wrestling with unsettledness in his mind, he went over to Macedonia.<sup>14</sup> Paul did not let the unknown situation damage his emotional health.

In addition, Paul built some healthy habits over the years. He learned to choose gratitude over complaints. When he obeyed the vision of the call from Macedonia and took the historical detour from Asia Minor to Europe, he encountered obstacles, hardships, resistance, and prosecution (Acts 16:6-17:15). Yet, in the letter to the Philippians, Paul gave thanks for the believers and the ministry. When one chooses to give thanks to God regardless of the circumstances, God always brings emotional stability to the grateful soul.

Furthermore, Paul chose joy over sadness and self-pity in hard times. Paul mentioned joy fourteen times in his letter to the Philippians while he was in prison. As a result, Paul's joyful attitude spared him from a lot of emotional upheaval during

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<sup>13</sup> 1 Thess. 3:1-10.

<sup>14</sup> 2 Cor. 2:12-13.

times of trials.

These examples from the Bible inspire us that not only does the exercise of proper self-care have beneficial and functional implications in ministry, but it is also the result of a balanced theology. The exercise of proper self-care is the reflection of a Biblical attitude that can benefit all areas of our life and work. It reveals our conception of who we are in relation to God and to the world. Martin Luther defined the freedom of a Christian as someone who is “perfectly free lord of all, subject to none, yet at the same time, he is also a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.”<sup>15</sup> Consider the two ways in which Jesus described himself: “The son of man came eating and drinking, and they say ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard...’” (Matthew 11:19) and “The son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45) Jesus demonstrated to us that it was not God’s desire to make us his slaves. This point is made clear in the Parable of the Prodigal Son. The sharp contrast between the attitudes of the father and of the Prodigal son (and his brother as well) reflects two different concepts of a person’s relationship with God. The son, after getting himself into a miserable and helpless situation, repented from his self-centered attitude and wanted to return home to the father. He was probably thinking the best he could hope for was the position of a slave. He might even expect

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<sup>15</sup> Martin Luther, *Christian Liberty* (Minneapolis: Fortress Publishers, 1957), 7.

to talk about what kind of work he would do. However, the father was not interested in getting a son back to work for him. He was overwhelmed by the joy of gaining a son back and was very concerned about the fact that he had a lot of things he wanted to give to the son---a robe, a ring, shoes, and a party. The father took joy in reconciling with his son. He desired nothing less than a son. It was through the father's attitude the prodigal son finally understood the meaning of homecoming. Henri Nouwen in his book, *Return of the Prodigal Son* put it beautifully:

Home is the center of my being where I can hear the voice that says: "You are my Beloved, on you my favor rests"---the same voice that gave life to the first Adam and spoke to Jesus, the second Adam; the same voice that speaks to all children of God and sets them free to live in the midst of a dark world while remaining in the light. I have heard that voice. It has spoken to me in the past and continues to speak to me now. It is the never-interrupted voice of love speaking from eternity and giving life and love whenever it is heard. When I hear that voice, I know that I am home with God and have nothing to fear. As the Beloved of my heavenly Father, "I can walk in the valley of darkness: no evil would I fear." As the Beloved, I can confront, console, admonish, and encourage without fear of rejection or need for affirmation. As the Beloved, I can be tortured and killed without ever having to doubt that the love that is given to me is stronger than death. As the Beloved, I am free to live and give life, free also to die while giving life.<sup>16</sup>

The choice of being our Heavenly Father's son rather than a slave is not an easy one, however. The dark voices of our surrounding world constantly remind us that we are no good unless we can earn our "goodness" through measuring up to the standards and climbing the ladder of success. It is easy for a small group leader to see himself

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<sup>16</sup> Henri Nouwen, *Return of the Prodigal Son* (New York: Image Book 1992), 37-38.

or herself as an employee, a worker, or even a “slave” of God and try to measure up through meeting every demand of ministry. But the fact that Jesus used this parable to illustrate the heart of the Father is evidence that it was not the intention of God’s salvation. God is very much concerned about us. He wants us to believe that He cares about us more than He cares about what we can do for Him. We see this when Jesus was the house guest of Martha and Mary.<sup>17</sup> While Mary seemed to be doing nothing but listening to Jesus, Martha was busy preparing the reception, and was caught up with the complicated preparation and forgot to enjoy the Lord’s presence. Negative emotions welled up in the heart of a busy and grumpy Martha. She was so upset that she treated Jesus harshly and showered him with complaints: “Lord, don’t you care?” She developed a poor attitude toward the person she was serving in the first place. In doing so, Martha allowed the means to overwhelm the end. Even so, Jesus did not return Martha’s complaints with rebuke. He cared about Martha’s emotional status more than the reception she prepared. “But only one thing is needed,” said the Lord, and “Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”(Luke 10:42) In other words, the Lord took delight in whatever we can prepare for him as long as we enjoy serving Him. Proper self-care is the reflection of this balanced theology. God cares about the servant’s well-being more than the

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<sup>17</sup> Luke 10:38-42.

servant's performance. Hence, the primary responsibility of a small group leader is to firstly maintain the balance in his or her life. Without this balance, it would be impossible for a small group leader to provide healthy care and service to the group. Without a healthy servant, there will be no healthy ministry.



### **CHAPTER THREE**

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In my studies, I found inspiring models and research that would bring valuable insights into issues small group leaders are challenged with by different authors. There are a total of eight books, two articles and some resources available from the Internet that have informed and shaped the content of this thesis project. Some of these resources are more significant to this project and, therefore, command more discussion. The other resources reflect both the conceptual thinking and the content of this project.

I have organized the discussion in four parts to correspond to *the Curriculum of Preventive Self-care for Small Group Leaders*. The content of this curriculum include: Acknowledging the needs of self-care; Building a healthy foundation for self-care; Engaging in a process of personal growth; and Acquiring necessary skills to manage personal resources. This structure will provide a preliminary glimpse into the landscape of this project design.

#### **A. Acknowledging the Needs and the Challenges**

In the previous chapter, I have demonstrated through a few Biblical examples that the practice of proper self-care as a servant of God not only concurs with Biblical

teaching, but also indicates a faithful stewardship of God's grace. Failure to do so may result in devastating consequences. Christianity has been tainted by scandals of high profile leaders in recent decades in America. Gary L. McIntosh and Samuel D. Rima, Sr. in their book, *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*, have analyzed this recent phenomenon and concluded that these fallen leaders shared the deficits of ignoring their personal needs and failed to address them healthily. McIntosh & Rima identified five dysfunctional leadership styles: compulsive, narcissistic, paranoid, codependent, and passive-aggressive.<sup>18</sup> These dysfunctional leadership styles are the results of unmet needs of a person.

McIntosh & Rima proposed a five-step journey to overcome the dysfunctional aspect, which is called "the dark side," of a leader. These steps begins with a person acknowledging the existence of "the dark side", examining the past in order to identify the source of "the dark side," resisting unhealthy expectations, practicing progressive self-knowledge, and finally lead to an understanding of one's identity in Christ.<sup>19</sup>

Archibald Hart in his book, *Coping with Depression in the Ministry and Other Helping Professions*, acknowledged similar needs. Hart explained that because of the nature of church ministry, a minister is prone to stress disorders and depression.

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<sup>18</sup> A compulsive leader is obsessed with control; a narcissistic leader suffers from an inflated sense of personal importance; a paranoid leader is suspicious, fearful and jealous; a codependent leader covers up problem and suppresses frustration and anger; and a passive-aggressive leader resists demands, procrastinates. All are results of dysfunctional personalities which the authors called "the dark side." See Gary McIntosh & Samuel D. Rima, Sr., *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership* (MI: Baker Books, 1997), 85-151.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 152-210.

Hart's analysis can also be applied to small group leaders, since the role of a small group leader in many ways is remarkably similar to a minister's. Often times both roles succumb to ministry situations that cultivate a chronic feeling of incompleteness. They also experience pervasive anxiety about tasks still needing attention, stress result from dealing with conflicts, difficult personalities, and communication problems. Furthermore, both are working with an organization in which the commitment of members are on a voluntary basis and with lack of criteria for measuring work accomplishment. These ambiguous qualities contribute to their vulnerability to emotional stress and other disorders.

The initial step to tackle the problem many likely face in the ministry setting is to acknowledge the existence of such problems. Both McIntosh & Rima and Hart's work indicated that it is crucial to first recognize the needs of the person and to admit that "the dark side" is lurking within himself or herself. McIntosh & Rima also offered several simple inventories to help a person identify his or her leadership styles and concluded with a circle graph to map the overall leadership tendency.<sup>20</sup> This simple but helpful tool will be included in the Appendix of this thesis project to assist a small group leader's self-discovery in terms of his or her potential leadership challenge.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 91-137, especially the questionnaires after each type's discussion and the combination circle graphs on pp.136-137. See also the Appendix on p.90 of this thesis.

## **B. Building a Healthy Foundation**

In order to achieve a well-balanced life style, a servant of God needs to acknowledge his or her needs, and also to cultivate a healthy foundation to deal with his or her personal struggles, motivation, and tendencies. For Christians, this foundation has to be a foundation that is rooted in the grace of God. There are two articles and three books in this area that are helpful in helping us develop a good foundation that leads to proper self-care.

First of all is an article written by Wendell Friest, *Understanding and Preventing Missionary Burnout*. As a missionary-counselor in Taiwan for more than three decades, Friest suggested that a balanced theology as the remedy for ministry burnout is beneficial to our discussion. Secondly, Carl Rogers' essay *The Interpersonal Relationship in the Facilitation of Learning*, provided insight in cultivating healthy attitudes. Thirdly, *Hope and Change for Humpty Dumpty*, by Gary Sweeten and Steve Grielbing on effective life skills written specifically for small group leaders is also valuable. Lastly, a brief discussion on the philosophy of "The Stephen Ministry," a training ministry designed to nurture care-givers in local churches, confirms the importance of our attention in the building of a healthy foundation for care-givers such as small group leaders.

The remedy for "the dark side" as well as the problem of sin in humanity is to

return to the foundation that is rooted in the understanding of the grace of God. In the book, *Truefaced*, Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, and John Lynch discussed such a remedy. They explained that in our attempts to please God, we often thought we could fix our sin by hiding and denying its very existence. However, this denial only leads us to more pretending and final despair because no real and meaningful change has occurred.

Thrall, McNicol & Lynch also draw a fundamental distinction of two different motives: our desire to please God and our determination to trust Him. The former results in a striving that one never feels done enough to please God while the latter results in a trust that experiences God's full pleasure.<sup>21</sup> The most significant point demonstrated through this book is to bring us back to the grace of God, the unconditional love and acceptance expressed on the cross of Calvary, a place where we can truly deal with the unmet needs and sins in our lives.

Just as Thrall, McNicol, & Lynch demonstrated, people who serve in church ministry, such as small group leaders, often carry these unmet needs and use their ministry as an attempt to quench the dissatisfactions in their own lives. Such an attempt is destructive because the primary motivation for ministry is self-centered and self-serving. Consequently, their hard work in ministry often lead to disappointment, despair, and ministry burnout.

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<sup>21</sup>Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, and John Lynch, *TrueFaced* (CO: Navpress 2003).

Furthermore, Friest in his essay categorized two types of personalities that contribute to ministry burnout. These two personality types are crucial for small group leaders to be aware of in order to build a strong foundation for personal well-being in ministry. The first one is achievement-based personality in which the person's self-worth and self-acceptance are based on a sense of achievement. If this type of person faces high stress over a period of time, he or she will result in achievement fatigue.

The second type is the compassion-based personality in which the person's self-worth is based on the ability of meeting others' needs. This type of person when faced with high stress over time will produce compassion fatigue. Both types of personality are reflections of the unmet needs of a person and they are common among small group leaders. When not dealt with properly, both can make a small group leader susceptible to ministry burnout.

Friest's insightful analysis highlights the causes for ministry burnout among small group leaders. Some small group leaders serve because they need the achievement of ministry to compensate for their unhealthy self-worthiness; others serve for the affirmation of being wanted in order to confirm their values. Both serve for the wrong reason. Both types are self-centered and self-gratifying. Their well-being is dependent upon others' affirmation and therefore, subject to disappointment and

despair.

Friest in his work drew upon the doctrine of Christology and proposed a two-stage remedy for both personality types that could contribute to ministry burnout. The first stage is to come out of a slave-modality and into a daughter-son modality, then to return to a slave modality without losing the daughter-son modality. Friest based his work from the insight of the paradoxical truth about the person of Christ: He is the son of God and at the same time, son of man.<sup>22</sup> He suggested that we need to learn to be children of God before we can be servants of God. Reversing the order would not only bring devastating results in our lives, but it also would be un-Biblical. The gospel truth is to restore us as sons and daughters to a loving Father. It is only with this understanding that one can return to the slave modality and serve God out of gratitude and love.<sup>23</sup> This understanding will free a small group leader from using ministry to meet his or her unmet needs of gaining acceptance through achievement or through care-giving. In addition, I found this Biblical truth and insight best expressed through a set of attitudes proposed by Carl Rogers.

Rogers, best known for his contribution to client-centered therapy and his role in the development of counseling, concluded that people would become increasingly

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<sup>22</sup> For example, Jesus declared his divinity in Mark 2:28 (the authority to forgive sins), John 8:42 (he is come from God), 8:58 (“before Abraham was born, I am!”), 10:30 (“I and the Father are one.”) And yet he announced his humble servanthood in Mark 10:45 (“the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”)

<sup>23</sup> Wendell Friest, *Understanding and Prevention of Missionary Burnout*. In 1992 April Taiwan Mission Quarterly, Taiwan.

trustworthy once they feel that their subjective experiences are both respected and progressively understood at a deep level. In his 1967 essay entitled, *The Interpersonal Relationship in the Facilitation of Learning*, Rogers pointed out that in order to facilitate this trustworthy relationship, it is crucial for a facilitator to possess three “attitudinal qualities”: realness (or genuineness), acceptance, and empathy.<sup>24</sup> These qualities are also significant from the Christian perspective for they are tangible expressions of unconditional love and the grace of God. They communicate a love that affirms a person’s value and uniqueness regardless of his or her ability and capacity. They enhance a deeper level of trust, which inspires and encourages the best quality of a person to shine through. When these qualities are applied to a small group leader, it will foster a healthy foundation of self-image to deal with personal challenges in ministry. This is the expression of love mentioned in 1 John 4:18: “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”

The most basic of these essential attitudes, according to Rogers, is realness or genuineness. A genuine person is a person who accepts his or her strengths as well as weakness without denying either of those qualities. Rogers described the quality of realness as a person who feels comfortable with whom he or she is, and enters into a

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<sup>24</sup> Carl R. Rogers (1967) “The interpersonal relationship in the facilitation of learning” reprinted in H. Kirschenbaum and V. L. Henderson eds., *The Carl Rogers Reader* (London: Constable, 1997), 304-311.



caring relationship without presenting a front or a façade. This means that the helper<sup>25</sup> is fully in touch and aware of the feelings he or she is experiencing and is able to communicate them if appropriate. In this way, the helper comes into a direct personal encounter with the seeker, meeting the learner or seeker on a person-to-person basis.<sup>26</sup>

The second essential attitude is acceptance. It is the valuing of the seeker and his or her feelings and opinions. It is a caring of the seeker in a non-possessive way, an acceptance of the seeker as a separate person. Acceptance is a trust that affirms the fundamental value of the seeker. It is also “a prizing of the learner as an imperfect human being with many feelings, many potentialities. The [helper’s] prizing or acceptance of the [seeker] is an operational expression of [his or] her essential confidence and trust in the capacity of the human organism.”<sup>27</sup> Acceptance is a genuine respect of the seeker as a person.

The third attitudinal quality is empathic understanding. It is an attitude that can promote understanding and communicate appreciation. This attitude requires the helper being in the other’s shoes, viewing the world through the seeker’s eyes. Rogers spoke of this attitudinal quality as:

A further element that establishes a climate for self-initiated experiential learning is empathic understanding. When the helper has the ability to understand the seeker’s reactions from the inside, and is able to have an awareness, the process of

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<sup>25</sup> Hence “helper” denotes the person who provides counsel and care and “seeker” denotes the person who receives help and care.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 306.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 309.

education and learning in helping is increased. This kind of understanding is sharply different from the usual evaluative understanding, which follows the pattern of “I understand what is wrong with you.” However, when there is empathy, the reaction in the learner follows something of this pattern: “At least someone understands how it feels and seems to be [with] me without wanting to analyze me or judge me. Now I can blossom and grow and learn.”<sup>28</sup>

These attitudinal qualities are remarkably similar to the kind of love the Bible teaches. The quality of realness reflects the truthfulness of a person, being able to accept his or her own strength and weakness without fear and shame. The quality of acceptance summons a confirmation of valuing the uniqueness of a person without judgments, which fosters a healthy self-respect. And the quality of empathic understanding calls for humility in order to enter others’ emotions. They are well described in the famous passage about love by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13: love is kind, patient, not self-seeking, does not boast, always protects, always trusts, always hopes.

Similarly, Gary Sweeten & Steve Griebeling in their book, *Hope and Change for Humpty Dumpty*, argued the importance of four core conditions identified by Robert R. Carkhuff. They claimed that these core conditions, Genuineness, Respect, Empathy, and Warmth, make up about 30 percent of the helping process toward an effective solution.<sup>29</sup> Genuineness requires a person “to look honestly at [his] heart and soul to

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 310-311.

<sup>29</sup> Gary Sweeten and Steve Griebeling, *Hope And Change For Humpty Dumpty* (OH:1<sup>st</sup> Books Library 2002), 61.

discern the shadows that lurk within.”<sup>30</sup> It is a self-understanding with the humility to admit and accept one’s shortcomings and un-dealt conflicts. Genuineness is an important quality of an effective helper. Through examining one’s inner life and accepting oneself, it would free the helper to hear the journey of the other person without interference and distractions. A genuine person has better understanding of others and reaches out to them with increased compassion.

Sweeten & Griebeling’s second condition is warmth, which addresses the problem of distance in interpersonal relationship that can facilitate trust effectively. Through proper relationship distance, a helper can effectively convey a sense of warmth toward the seeker. The goal is to position the relationship within a “comfortable temperature” in order to cultivate a non-threatening atmosphere. Hence, the impact of non-verbal communication, especially body language, is at play and through the practice of non-verbal means of communication, a caring relationship and trust can be built between the helper and the seeker.<sup>31</sup>

The third condition that fosters caring relationship is listening with empathy. It requires the helper “with one ear tuned to the voice of God and the other to the cries of a hurting heart.”<sup>32</sup> It is an attempt to enter into the emotional world of the seeker yet maintain necessary objectivity. It is on one hand, participating in the seeker’s

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 73-82.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 85.

situation, but on the other hand, observing from an outsider's perspective. This paradoxical position reaps the benefit of being emotionally supportive and remaining objective and clear-minded.

The fourth condition Sweeten & Griebeling proposed is respect. Respect, according to the authors, is expressed in a healthy definition of personal responsibilities and proper boundaries. The goal of respect is to empower others to take up and fulfill their personal responsibilities, therefore, foster proper self-respect.

It is obvious that the four core conditions Sweeten & Griebeling incorporated are based on the three attitudinal qualities Rogers discovered. These essential attitudinal qualities and core conditions when applied and lived out have profound implication to the self-care of a small group leader. They can help a small group leader to build a healthy self-image. The quality of realness, which admits and accepts one's strength as well as limitations, helps a person to be truthful. The quality of acceptance communicates respect to others by affirming their unique values. The quality of empathic understanding requires a humble heart in order to truly understand others' feelings. These three basic attitudinal qualities, when applied to the care-giver, can help a small group leader to acquire a necessary understanding of himself or herself which will contribute to a balanced personality and a healthy self-image that is marked by **humility, truthfulness, and self-respect**. Furthermore, these attitudinal qualities

will greatly reduce the need to maintain an ideal image on the outside. It acknowledges the unmet needs and issues inside of a person and, therefore, paves the first step toward growth and breakthrough.

Therefore, a model of proper self-care for small group leaders will build upon the foundation of God's grace, which expressed in the three attitudinal qualities: Truthfulness, Humility, and Self-Respect. Upon this foundation, a process of growth with the assistance of managerial skills over one's life style, which will be further discussed in the following sections, will apply in order to achieve a well-balanced ministry life style. (*See Diagram 1.*)



***Diagram 1. A Model of Proper Self-Care for Small Group Leaders.***

Similar emphasis can be found in the philosophy of the Stephen Ministries, a growing ministry based in St. Louis, Missouri. It is a comprehensive training system that equips lay care givers to provide one-to-one Christian care to the bereaved, sick,

terminally ill, divorced, unemployed, and others facing a crisis.<sup>33</sup> The philosophy of the Stephen Ministries highlights the importance of keeping a care-giver's life on track while dealing with others who need help. It emphasizes five characters of a care-giver: Christ-centered, compassionate, full of faith, skilled, and trustworthy.

A Stephen Minister is a person who trusts that Jesus Christ, not personal ability or training, is the ultimate resource of faith, love, forgiveness, and healing. Upon this Christ-centered foundation, a Stephen Minister exercises compassion by sharing the care receivers' feelings and journey of suffering; trusting in God to supply necessary courage and love through prayers in order to minister to the care receiver; employing skills of listening, understanding, and relationship building to improve the quality of care giving; and striving to provide consistent, reliable, and confidential care.<sup>34</sup> It reminds the care giver to trust and rely upon Jesus Christ and, therefore, keeps the care-giver's focus on God. Trusting in God and relying upon Him is the most important aspect of self-care for a small group leader for it takes away the self-serving and self-centered motivation in ministry.

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<sup>33</sup> See website: <http://www.stephenministries.org/stephenministry/default.cfm/928?nvid=97>. Accessed on December 18, 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Kevin Wilson, *What is Stephen Ministry All About?* Reprinted from the newsletter of St. Andres Lutheran Church, Park Ridge, IL. On the website: [www.myallsaints.com/pdf\\_files/stephenministry.pdf](http://www.myallsaints.com/pdf_files/stephenministry.pdf) Accessed on December 18, 2006.

### C. Engaging in a Process of Growth

In order to nurture a healthy foundation, a small group leader needs to continue to engage in a process of personal growth. Gerard Egan's, *The Skilled Helper*, and Charles Kollar's, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*, provide practical frameworks to appropriate the functions and effectiveness of the attitudinal qualities discussed above. They also inspire a small group leader to engage in a journey of self-growth.

Egan's work shed insights on this aspect. Egan presented a three-stage model for effective counseling. It is a model that guides the client from identifying the problem, to plotting solutions and finally designing action plans for solutions. Even though this is a textbook for counseling professionals, I found it helpful for personal reflection and self-care. The practical techniques discussed in the book can help a person to clarify the problem and provides a direction to pursue solutions. Egan's work portrayed a very useful model in helping people in managing their problems by living more effectively and by developing unused opportunities more fully. It also empowers people to become better at helping themselves in their everyday lives.<sup>35</sup>

Egan's three-stage "Skilled Helper Model" is a framework for conceptualizing the helping process. It aims to help the seeker address three questions: What is going on?

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<sup>35</sup> Gerard Egan, *The Skilled Helper 7th edition*. (CA: Brooks/Cole, 2002), 7-8.

What do I want instead? And how might I get to what I want? The first question clarifies the problem. The second question explores possibilities and envisions the solutions. The final question plots action plans and strategies that can materialize the solutions.

The flow of the model is to provide the person with a road map of growth. Also, by examining the current situation, identifying a desirable solution, and planning strategy and actions this model can lead a person to the desired solution. Egan's first stage is to explore the issues by listening to the story, identifying the problems, and searching for areas that changes and progress can occur. This is a crucial stage because it is where trustful relationship is established with the application of Rogers' three attitudinal qualities. Egan's second stage is to generate energy and hope for change. This is achieved by helping the seeker paint a picture of how things could be improved and therefore, instilled hope within the seeker for the situation. The third stage is to design a tangible and achievable action plan that can foster such changes and solutions.

Another model by Kollar in his book, *Solution-Focused Pastoral Counseling*,<sup>36</sup> presented a similar view to Egan's. This model emphasized the seeker's existing strength and resource instead of the problems presented. Drawing upon the research

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<sup>36</sup> Charles A. Kollar, *Soulution-Focused Pastoral Counseling* (MI: Zondervan, 1997).



on “brief therapy” in counseling and respecting the time-constraint of pastoral counseling, Kollar showed that effective counseling need not be long-term. It is a four-step model in which a road map of recovery is paved. Koller’s first step is attentive listening. Attentive listening is to identify the problem and its exceptions. Encouragement is given when exceptions are found in order to affirm the seeker’s ability to change. The second step is to explore possible options and focus on the future. It follows by asking the seeker to envision a life without the problems presented. Following this step, goals are set, clarified and organized. The final step is to promote changes by encouraging positive actions, reducing fear, providing helpful comments, reviewing and adjusting the goals.

Both models can be adopted as a guiding structure for a small group leader’s growth after the challenges are identified. These are powerful tools that can be used to clarify focus which guides a small group leader in the process that is solution-oriented and that can reignite hope. These two models can inspire a small group leader to focus on solution and utilize his or her resources instead of the obstacles. Furthermore, these models can help a small group leader develop strategies to bring forth solutions. They serve to empower a small group leader to take ownership of his or her problems and responsibility for resolution.

#### **D. Acquiring Coping Skills**

Besides cultivating a Biblical foundation and employing an effective strategy of solution, a small group leader can benefit greatly from some managerial skills which would ultimately enhance self-care. One of these helpful skills is the understanding of healthy boundaries. The importance of this skill is evident in the Stephen Minister's training content--- "Maintaining Boundaries in Caregiving."<sup>37</sup> Henry Cloud and John Townsend's book, *Boundaries*, also provide great insights. According to Cloud & Townsend, proper boundaries promote healthy relationships. Cloud & Townsend speak to an area of self-development that has been largely neglected: godly boundaries in relationships. With healthy boundaries, one can determine more easily when a situation warrants the breaking of one or more boundaries in order to minister to someone else. This is as often a challenge to a small group leader. In a helping relationship like that of a small group leader and the seekers, if the boundaries are too rigid, it will not allow for appropriate love and bonding. On the other hand, if the personal boundaries between the small group leader and the seekers are too loose, the small group leader will not know when to say no and is likely to wear out and be resentful, and also be unable to love freely.

Healthy boundary promotes personal ownership and responsibility since the

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<sup>37</sup> See <http://www.stephenministries.org/stephenministry/default.cfm/975> Accessed on December 18, 2006.

definition of what is self and what is not will be established through defining proper boundaries. It gives freedom to a person because boundaries acknowledge what one has control over and therefore, implies priorities and effective allocation of personal resources in terms of time and energy.

Richard Swenson discussed the cultural changes and societal reasons that account for the pain of stress and overload as well as the prescriptions for overloaded lives in his book entitled, *Margins*. The prescription is having a margin--- margin in physical energy, emotional energy, time, and finances. We do not have margin because we overwork, over-commit, overspend and overeat. We spend too many hours at the office, accumulate too much debt, spend too little time in silence and solitude, neglect nutrition and exercise and rest, and fail to nurture important relationships. Swenson suggested that we need to be intentional and disciplined to keep a strict regimen of lifestyle changes which will help us cultivate margin in our bodies, our souls, our calendars, and our budgets. These crucial ideas in Swenson's work are especially helpful in providing wise strategies to help an overloaded small group leader to regain control over personal life.

Swenson also painted the end result of building margin into our lives, namely, health. Health is measured in contentment, balance, rest, and meaningful relationships. His discussions on contentment and balance were especially helpful, partly because

they probed deeper than behavioral issues into the motivations of the heart.

Swenson presented excellent research in analyzing our society's increasing rate of change and the magnitude of stress it has imposed upon individuals. He provided "prescriptions" to manage the stress. He also proposed actions and habits that will lead to establishing healthy margins on emotional energy, physical energy, time, and finances. While most of his "prescriptions" are drawn upon common sense, they are nevertheless helpful.<sup>38</sup> Some of his suggestions will be incorporated into this thesis project in the managerial skill aspect. Margins are not designed for selfish purposes, but rather through establishing margins, we can implement Biblical values in different areas of life. For example, in his discussion on finance margins, Swenson pointed out that the consumer-oriented and debt-based economy promotes wasteful spending habits which lead to stress. The prescriptions he proposed are to establish a responsible spending and budget habits and this is in agreement with the Biblical values regarding financial resource.

## **E. Conclusion**

By reviewing the literature in this chapter, an outline of a curriculum for preventing ministry burnout for small group leaders is taking shape. The prevention

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<sup>38</sup> Richard A. Swenson, *Margin* (CO: Navpress, 1992). His in-depth analysis of the overloaded problem is in Part One, and his suggested remedies are in Part Two.

of ministry burnout starts from the awareness of one's unmet needs and its potential negative impact. Questionnaires based on the designed by McIntosh & Rima to acquire a better understanding of this problem are called for. Moving forward from this awareness is to cultivate a healthy and biblical foundation to deal with "the dark side" of our personality. This foundation is rooted in the grace of God, expressed in three attitudinal qualities, i.e. self-acceptance, self-respect, and humility. These attitudes are tangible demonstration of a choice: choose to put our trust in God when dealing with personal struggles and problems. An effective goal-driven process is necessary to guide the progress in this journey of personal growth. This process will empower a small group leader by discovering his or her strength and resources that can foster growth and breakthrough. This process of personal growth will also be carried out with accountability with other small group leaders as partners. Finally, establish appropriate boundaries by exercising some basic skills in managing time and resource can bring a sense of control and order to the stressful life of a small group leader. A diagram for the above described self-care model will be as follows:



**Diagram 2.** *A Model for Proper Self-Care for Small Group Leaders (details).*

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **A CURRICULUM OF PREVENTIVE SELF-CARE FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS AT RUTGERS COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN CHURCH**

Rutgers Community Christian Church, established since 1979, is located in Franklin Township in Middlesex county of New Jersey. It is a growing non-denominational church with about two thousand worship attendees, of whom ninety-nine percent are Chinese descendants. Rutgers Community Christian Church operates under a five-department executive board: the Education Department, the Mission Department, the Administration/Service Department, the Worship Department, and the Caring Department. Small group ministry is the primary focus of the Caring Department. It serves to promote vital community life among congregational members in the church. My responsibility, as a pastor, is to oversee the training and counseling of small group leaders in the church. It is my experience that at some point in their ministry most small group leaders struggle with stress and frustration from serving as well as in their personal lives and results in a lost of motivation to continue serving. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for a small group leader to be equipped with skills and understanding that would benefit their emotional and spiritual well-being.

Based on the framework developed from the last chapter, a curriculum of proper self-care for small group leaders at Rutgers Community Christian Church will consist

of four major units: Knowing your “dark side,” Building a foundation for self-care, A plan for growth, and Acquiring skills for self-care. In this chapter, I will present the content of the curriculum in the format of annotated PowerPoint slides. Preceding each unit is an outline with aims for the unit and its sub-units to clarify the goal of the contents. The following is the structure of the curriculum with aims of each unit and sub-unit.

**Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side” (Slides # 4-20)**

Unit Aim: To acquire an understanding of the negative impact of my “Dark Side.”

**Sub-unit One: The Negative Impact of the “Dark Side” (Slides # 5-7)**

Aim: To understand the meaning and the impact of the “Dark Side” in our lives as our responsibility level elevates.

**Sub-unit Two: The Five Dysfunctional Types (Slides # 8-18)**

Aim: To know the driving force of the five dysfunctional leadership types and their negative impacts in our lives.

**Sub-unit Three: What Does My “Dark Side” Look Like? (Slides # 19-20)**

Aim: To develop knowledge of my dysfunctional tendency through a simple questionnaire analysis.

**Unit Two: Building a Foundation for Self-Care (Slides # 21-32)**

Unit Aim: To cultivate a set of healthy attitudes that would contribute to a balanced life style through the study of selected Biblical examples and principles.

**Sub-unit One: Some Biblical Examples (Slides # 21-24)**

Aim: To learn the importance of proper self-care from some characters in the Bible.

**Sub-unit Two: Clarification of Our Roles (Slides # 25-28)**

Aim: To understand our appropriate roles in ministry and to develop a reasonable and Biblical expectation toward our ministry.

**Sub-unit Three: Three Healthy Attitudes (Slides # 29-32)**

Aim: To understand and cultivate a set of healthy attitudes that would lead to a Biblical self-image.



**Unit Three: A Plan for Growth (Slides # 33-36)**

Unit Aim: To develop a strategy that would foster personal growth by accessing one's strength and resources.

**Sub-unit One: Accessing the Resources (Slide # 33-34)**

Aim: To discover one's strength and resources that contribute to a solution toward the problems identified in Unit One.

**Sub-unit Two: Drawing a Road Map of Growth (Slides # 35-36)**

Aim: To develop a simple strategy of growth in light of the understanding of one's "Dark Side".

**Unit Four: Acquiring Skills for Self-Care (Slides # 37-40)**

Aim: To develop necessary skills that would foster personal growth.

**Sub-unit One: Drawing Boundaries (Slides # 37-38)**

Aim: To understand the importance of setting healthy boundaries in personal life and in ministry.

**Sub-unit Two: Management Skills (Slides # 39-40)**

Aim: To develop healthy boundaries and other necessary managerial skills to maintain the boundaries.

**Annotated PowerPoint Slides of a Curriculum of Preventive Self-Care for Small  
Group Leaders at Rutgers Community Christian Church**

**Slide 1**

**A Curriculum of  
Preventive Self-Care  
for  
Small Group Leaders**

*Rutgers Community Christian Church  
71 Cedar Grove Lane  
Somerset, New Jersey 08873*

**Slide 2**

**Content**

**Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”**

1. The Negative Impact of the “Dark Side”
2. The Five Dysfunctional Types
3. What Does My “Dark Side” Look Like?

**Unit Two: Building a Foundation for Self-Care**

1. Some Biblical Examples
2. Clarification of Our Roles
3. Three Healthy Attitudes

**Unit Three: A Plan for Growth**

1. Accessing the Resources
2. Drawing a Road Map of Growth

**Unit Four: Acquiring Skills for Self-Care**

1. Drawing Boundaries
2. Management Skills

2

### Slide 3

## Some Ground Rules

- Accountability
- Confidentiality
- Respect
- Faith & Trust in the Lord

3

#### Ground Rules Explained:

1. Every participant in this training should pair up with a person in this training group, preferably same gender, to form an accountability partnership.
2. Contact each other at least twice a week to intercede for each other's needs and in particular, issues related and discussed in the training sessions.
3. All information within this accountability pair should be kept confidential and cannot be revealed in any way without obtaining permission from the person, with the exception of the following two situations: suicidal tendency and homicidal tendency.
4. Each person will be treated with respect.
5. Although the content of this training may be helpful, it should not replace our trust and faith in the Lord for His power to transform lives, including our own.

#### Slide 4

### Unit One

- Knowing Your “Dark Side”
  - What is the “Dark Side”?

4

**Unit Aim:** To acquire an understanding of the negative impact of my “Dark Side.”

The facilitator asks the question: What is the “dark side”? Participants may have various answers. Try to group the different answers in categories and guide the participants to the following consensus:

The Dark Side can be defined as the inner urge and dysfunctions of our personality as the result of unmet emotional needs. They often remain unknown until we encounter stressful situations.

#### Slide 5

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

1. The Negative Impact of the “Dark Side”
  - What is the negative impact of the “Dark Side”?

5

**Sub-unit Aim: To understand the meaning and the impact of the “Dark Side” as our level of responsibility elevates.**

The facilitator asks the question: “What are the negative impacts of the ‘dark side’?” Facilitate the discussion. The next two slides will provide some directions for concluding the discussion.

The following two slides serve as the concluding remarks from the previous two discussion questions.

**Slide 6**

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

- A short list of our emotional needs. In other words, we all need to feel:
  - Accepted, acknowledged, admired, appreciated, approved of, capable, challenged, clear (not confused), competent, confident, forgiven, forgiving, free, fulfilled, heard, helped, helpful, important, in control, included, listened to, loved, needed, noticed productive / useful, reassured, recognized, respected, safe / secure, supported, treated fairly, understood, valued, worthy
- When we don't feel fulfilled of one of these emotions, we have an "unmet emotional need."

6

**Slide 7**

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

- **Some Ways We Try to Compensate for Our Unmet Emotional Needs:**
  - By managing/controlling/manipulating others
  - By feeling superior to them.
  - By pleasing others.
  - By seeking status, money, fame, success at high costs of ourselves and others.
  - By competing and trying to be the fastest, the smartest, the best, etc.

7

## Slide 8

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

2. Unmet needs manifest in leadership styles:

- Compulsive (Controlling)
- Narcissistic (Self-Serving)
- Paranoid (Fear-Driven)
- Codependent (People-Pleasing)
- Passive-Aggressive (Reluctant)

8

**Sub-unit Aim: To know the negative impacts and the driving force of the five dysfunctional leadership types.**

At this point, the facilitator can introduce and distribute the leadership style test to the participants to answer and to discover their individual styles. The test is amended in the Appendix One of this thesis.

## Slide 9

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

- **Compulsive (Controlling)**
  - Need to maintain absolute order, rigid control
  - Sees the organization as another area of personal life that must be controlled and its performance a direct reflection of personal performance
  - Pursue perfection to an extreme
  - Rigid and highly systematized daily routine
  - Status-conscious
  - Look for reassurance & approval
  - Excessively devote to work, workaholics
  - Emotionally out-of-control, outburst of anger; manipulative
  - Excessive criticism and critiquing
  - E.g. Moses

9

The facilitator can explain in detail the signs of the compulsive/controlling style of leadership. Moses is the Biblical example of such a dysfunctional leader.

Throughout Moses’ ministry, he demonstrated the need to control (personally handling

the daily matters of the Israelites from morning to evening, until his father-in-law suggested him to ordain elders to help him out), outburst of short temper and anger (killing of the Egyptian when he was in the Egyptian palace; angry with the Israelites by striking the rock instead of commanding it, etc.)

**Slide 10**

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

- Driving Forces of the Compulsive Style
  - Need to be in control
  - Need to be approved
  - Need to be assured

10

**Slide 11**

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

- Narcissistic (Self-Serving)
  - Obsessed with self image, self-absorption
  - Image is everything
  - All people & issue closely orbit around him
  - Uncertain about self
  - Dissatisfy with self, accomplishment
  - Exploit others for personal needs
  - Overestimate own achievement and refuse to recognize others values
  - E.g. Solomon

11

The facilitator can go over the signs of a narcissistic/self-serving leader and use King Solomon as an example. Solomon’s tenure as king was marked with lavish projects one after another. He cared about his image and took exceptional pride in his accomplishment. The burden he placed upon the kingdom and his people became one

of the reasons for the decline of the Israel Kingdom.

**Slide 12**

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

- Driving Forces of the Narcissistic Style:
  - Need to maintain ideal self-image
  - Insecure about personal value
  - Dissatisfy with self

12

**Slide 13**

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

- Paranoid (Fear-Driven)
  - Afraid of anything, anyone, whether real or imaginative
  - Suspicious, hostile, guarded in relationships
  - Hypersensitive to others actions
  - Fearful potential rebellion
  - Uses scheming and spying tactics to maintain control
  - Misinformation, rumor, gossip
  - Overreact to criticism
  - Rigid structure and control
  - E.g. King Saul

13

The facilitator can go over the signs of the paranoid/fear-driven style of dysfunctional leadership. An example of the paranoid style of dysfunctional leadership from the Bible is King Saul, especially after God had chosen David as his replacement to be the King of Israel. Saul’s pursuit of David’s life demonstrated his fear and insecurity, which led to the development of many signs of a paranoia.



## Slide 14

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

- Driving Forces of the Paranoid Style:
  - Fear
  - The need to feel safe
  - Jealousy

14

## Slide 15

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

- Codependent (People-Pleasing)
  - Assume personal responsibility for others action and emotion
  - Self-blaming for the failure of others
  - High tolerance for others' bizarre behaviors
  - Go far to avoid conflict and hurting others feelings
  - Always willing to take on another task regardless of personal limitations and stress
  - Obsessively worry about others feeling
  - Peacemaker who covers up problems
  - E.g. Samson

15

The facilitator can summarize the details of a codependent/people-pleasing leadership style. An example from the Bible will be Samson. It was prophesied to his parents that Samson would be born as a Nazirite. He was expected to fulfill the vow of a Nazirite. He was also expected to be the instrument of God to deliver His people from their enemy. Although Samson possessed great physical strength, he was weak in controlling his impulse. He demonstrated a trait of mental weakness when faced with moral choices. He polluted himself by consuming the honey from a carcass; willingly fell into the temptation of women from Israelites' enemies.

Ultimately, Samson's codependency led him to self-destruction.

**Slide 16**

### Unit One: Knowing Your "Dark Side"

- Driving Forces of the Codependent Style:
  - Want to be liked by others
  - Need to be accepted

16

**Slide 17**

### Unit One: Knowing Your "Dark Side"

- Passive-Aggressive (Reluctant)
  - Reluctant, resist demands to adequately perform tasks
  - Procrastination, fear of failure & success
  - Short outburst of extreme emotions
  - Little or no enthusiasm
  - Complaints
  - E.g. Jonah

17

The facilitator can go over the signs of the passive-aggressive/reluctant style of dysfunctional leadership. Jonah serves as an example of a passive-aggressive leader. He resisted demands to adequately perform tasks. He expressed his reluctance through procrastination, dawdling, stubbornness, and intentional inefficiency. Even after he was disciplined by the Lord and finally went to Nineveh, he did his job with no enthusiasm.

**Slide 18**

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

- Driving Forces of the Passive-Aggressive Style:
  - Fear of failure
  - Uncertain about personal ability
  - Avoid stress at all cost

18

**Slide 19**

### Unit One: Knowing Your “Dark Side”

3. What does my “Dark Side” Look Like?

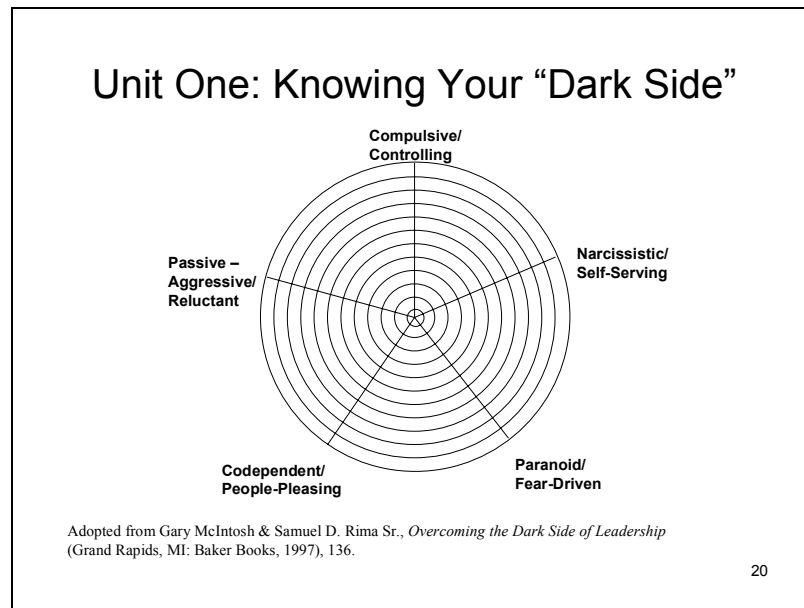
- What is your tendency?
- What are some of the “dangers” you can see in your leadership style as a small group leader?
- What are the strengths you can identify in your particular leadership style?

19

**Sub-unit Aim: To develop knowledge of my personal dysfunctional tendency through a simple questionnaire analysis.**

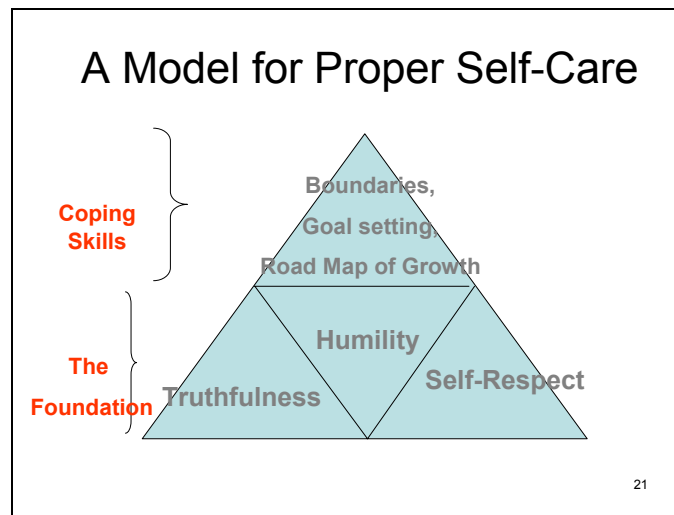
At this point, the facilitator can guide the discussion focus to the participants’ results from the questionnaire. In small groups, each participant will share the three discussion questions on this slide and others can contribute and comment on the sharing. It would be helpful to remind participants to take note of their discoveries for their personal learning.

## Slide 20



The facilitator can use this slide to demonstrate how to fill out the scores from the questionnaire.

## Slide 21



The facilitator emphasizes to the participants that, with the new awareness of the style and condition of our personal “dark side,” the message of the gospel is powerful to offer us hope and strength that can redeem our “dark side” and grow us into the likeness of Christ. This is a model based on the foundation of grace expresses in

terms of the three attitudinal qualities: truthfulness, humility, and self-respect. Each of these qualities represents a facet of God's grace at work in our lives.

Upon this foundation, one can acquire the direction and the skills to build a healthy ministry and personal life.

**Slide 22**

## Unit Two: Building a Foundation

- To develop proper self-care, we need to go back to the Bible for insights and depend upon the Grace of God.

22

**Unit Aim: To cultivate a set of healthy attitudes that would contribute to a balanced life style through the study of selected Biblical examples and principles.**

The Grace of God is not only the foundation of a Christian's life, but also the foundation of a balanced life.

**Slide 23**

## Unit Two: Building A Foundation

1. Biblical Examples for Proper Self-Care:
  - Moses
  - Elijah
  - Paul
- Questions of reflection:
  - What specific things would help you relax/cope when under stress?
  - Are they negative or positive? (Examples of negative coping activities: addiction on computer, internet, pornographic materials, substance, coffee, alcohol, etc.)

23

**Sub-unit Aim: to learn the importance of proper self-care from some characters in the Bible.**

Proper self-care is crucial in our ministry as well as our personal lives. The facilitator can use the three Biblical examples, which were discussed in detail in Chapter Two of this thesis project, to demonstrate the importance of proper self-care.

The facilitator can use the reflective question to guide the participants to think of the ways they usually cope with stress. The purpose is to help the participants to identify whether these activities are positive or negative. Some examples of positive coping/relax activities are: exercise, painting, drawing, artistic creation, music, etc. Negative coping activities, for example, are: addiction on computer, Internet, games, gambling, substance abuse (coffee, alcohol, etc.), pornographic materials, etc.

**Slide 24**

## Unit Two: Building a Foundation

- What does Jesus care most?
- Luke 10:38-42
  - Martha vs. Maria

24

Proper self-care is not only the sign of a faithful servant of God, but when it is practiced it also reflects the understanding of God's perfect, good, and pure will in His children's lives. The facilitator can lead a short discussion on this passage. The point is that Jesus cared more about the emotional status of Martha than what Martha can offer in her service. In the same way, our Lord wants us to experience His presence and love in the ministry. This reminds us that serving is not about us or our

unmet needs, but it is about experiencing God himself.

**Slide 25**

## Unit Two: Building a Foundation

2. What should I know about my role?

- 1 Cor. 3:5-9
  - A Gardener providing favorable conditions
  - The Growth of the plant is not the gardener's responsibility

25

**Sub-unit Aim: To understand our appropriate roles in ministry and to develop reasonable and Biblical expectations toward our ministry.**

Furthermore, the understanding of our function or roles in ministry can help us to be more balanced. Paul discussed his role in 1 Cor. 3: 10-15, which can be summarized as the following:

Paul and Apollos, however powerful and gifted they were, were merely facilitators who provided suitable condition of growth for the seed. On the other hand, only God can make and is responsible for the growth of the seed.

The implication of this passage is that as a small group leader, one's duty is to foster suitable conditions of spiritual growth for the group members, but the result of such labor is God's responsibility.

## Slide 26

### Unit Two: Building a Foundation

- What Happens when I confuse my role?
  - Burnout A (accomplishment fatigue)
    - Tendency to over plan
    - Multiple thoughts & actions
    - Need to win
    - Desire for recognition
    - Always feeling guilty
    - Impatient with delays or interruptions
    - Over-extend oneself
    - Always in a hurry
    - Excessive competitive drive
    - Workaholics
    - Perfectionist

26

The facilitator can share with the participants that if we confuse our role and assume responsibilities and load that are not meant for us to carry, we may suffer from despair and stress that will ultimately lead to burnout.

Wendell Friest's essay, *Understanding and Prevention of Missionary Burnout*, discussed two types of ministry burnouts: accomplishment fatigue and compassion fatigue. The symptoms of both types are listed in this and the following slides. The facilitator can explain about them and ask the participants whether they think they share some of these symptoms.

## Slide 27

### Unit Two: Building a Foundation

- What Happens when I confuse my role?
  - Burnout B (compassion fatigue)
    - Willingness to give emotional support but seldom to ask for support
    - Feeling selfish when not responding to other's need
    - Excessive concern not to hurt people's feelings
    - Determination to get a job done no matter what the cost is to oneself
    - Desire to avoid conflict
    - Tendency to say yes too much and too often
    - One ought to be able to help everyone
    - Frequently complain about others

27



## Slide 28

### Unit Two: Building a Foundation

- Don't mess up the order:
  - Firstly, to come out of a slave-modality into a daughter-son modality.
    - Gal. 4:4-7; Mt. 11:19
  - Secondly, to return to a slave-modality without ever losing the daughter-son modality.
    - Mark 10:45; 1 Cor. 9:19

28

The remedy of the two kinds of ministry burnout can be found in the Bible. The Good News of Jesus is firstly to restore us to be children of God, fully accepted and loved by God even though while we are sinners. Then, the divine love motivates us to live a life that will please the Father and serve Him in gratitude and love. Please refer to Chapter Two (page 13) and Chapter Three (page 27) for detailed discussion of this remedy.

## Slide 29

### Unit Two: Building a Foundation

- #### 3. Developing Healthy Attitudes
- Truthfulness
  - Self-Respect
  - Humility

29

**Sub-unit Aim: To understand and cultivate a set of healthy attitudes that would lead to a Biblical self-image.**

A small group leader needs to cultivate healthy attitudes in order to achieve proper self-care and a well-balanced life. There are three attitudinal qualities that are helpful. They will be further explained in the details that follow.

**Slide 30**

## Unit Two: Building a Foundation

- Healthy Attitudes
  - Truthfulness
    - How do you define 'truthfulness'? What does Genesis 3 teach us about 'truthfulness'?
    - What characteristics do a truthful person have?
    - What image do you want to maintain in front of others? Why?
    - In what situation(s) do you need to wear a 'mask'?
    - What are some of the effects of self-disclosure? What is appropriate self-disclosure?

30

The facilitator can use these questions to lead a discussion on the quality of truthfulness.

The importance of truthfulness is that it sets a person free to be himself or herself without fear. It removes the tension between the need to maintain an ideal or expected image as a small group leader, and the struggles one faces from personal needs and challenges at the same time. To be a truthful person is to be genuine. Thus, the ability to share one's struggles and emotions properly without pretending is a mark of truthfulness.

Genesis Chapter Three teaches us that all human are sinners. The results of sin are shame and guilt. Shame makes us hide, pretend, and deny. Guilt makes us afraid and fear punishment, which leads to self-defense.

The last question about appropriate self-disclosure is important. The goal for raising this question is to help a small group leader develop some sensitivity toward what is appropriate and what is inappropriate disclosure. A criteria of appropriate

disclosure is that the information will not lead to confusion and disrespect for the hearer but beneficial to the Biblical learning at hand.

**Slide 31**

## Unit Two: Building a Foundation

- Healthy Attitudes:
  - Self-Respect
    - What makes you valuable? Please make a list.
    - Identify items in this list that will not change.
    - What is our value according to Genesis 1:26-27?
    - What does it mean when the Bible says we are created in God's 'image' and 'likeness'?
    - What are your responsibilities?
    - What does Gal 6:2 & 5 say about responsibilities?

31

The second healthy attitude is self-respect.

Biblical self-respect takes root in that fact that each person is created in God's image and likeness. (Genesis 1:26-27) This image and likeness of God is the result of God's action, and therefore it is independent of our ability, physical appearance, and capacity. It signifies that God has the ownership of our lives. Just as Jesus cleverly answered the question of the Pharisees about paying taxes to Caesar, the portrait on the denarius signified its ownership. Similarly, a person bearing the image and likeness of the Creator is owned by the Creator. The value of our lives and our self-respect rests upon this truth.

Biblical self-respect also comes from a proper recognition of our responsibility. In Gal. 6:2 and 5, Paul distinguished between two kinds of responsibilities: burden and load. While burden is something that cannot be carried alone but requires assistance, load is the proper duty of a person that cannot be fulfilled by others. An example of such would be in the event of a medical emergency, it is a Christian duty to provide assistance to help the victim by cooking meals or providing child care. But it would

not be appropriate for a Christian to regularly perform parental duty for others in maturing their children.

Healthy self-respect is rooted in God's Word and comes from taking up appropriate responsibilities. A small group leader needs to recognize his or her own value in God's eyes and properly assume suitable responsibilities.

**Slide 32**

## Unit Two: Building a Foundation

- Healthy Attitudes:
  - Humility
    - How does humility express in relationship according to James 1:19?
    - What are the implication of the above question in our relationship with others in our small groups and with God?
    - What is your response the last time when your opinion was not accepted or recognized? How does your response inform you about yourself?

32

James 1:19 implies empathic listening. Listening with empathy requires an “other-centered” attitude, which is a tangible expression of humility. It expresses in one's willingness to listen to and understand others' feelings and issues without condemnation or judgments. As a small group leader, one needs to cultivate such attitude because by exercising this attitudinal quality, humility is fostered. Humility reminds a person not to be self-centered and is able to help the person deal with difficulties and challenges with calmness and peace when they arise.

The last question serves as a good indicator of our usual respond to challenges and rejection which informs us about the problems within. True humility will not respond with retaliation, defensiveness, and bitterness. It is common for a small group leader to face challenges from the group members. These challenges are the perfect opportunities for a small group leader to learn how to grow in humility and maturity.

**Slide 33**

## Unit Three: A Plan for Growth

- Plan your growth
  - Growth is intentional (direction & skills)
  - Growth happens in a context (small group ministry)
  - Accountability fosters growth

33

**Unit Aim: To develop a strategy and exercise necessary skills that would foster personal growth by accessing one's strength and resources.**

The facilitator can share the facts about growth in this slide: it requires intentionality, it happens in a ministry context, and it accelerates when there is accountability. Because growth requires intentionality, we need to make plans and exercise proper skills. Growth will also be more effective when one submits to an accountability partner. Small group ministry is one of the best environments to foster personal growth because it provides challenges and support.

**Slide 34**

## Unit Three: A Plan for Growth

- 1. Accessing the Resources

34

**Sub-unit Aim: To discover one's strength and resources that would contribute to a solution toward the problems identified in Unit One.**

To draft a plan of growth, one needs to access his or her resources. This may include energy, time, supportive personnel, one's own strengths in different areas, etc. It would be helpful to invite input and observation from others who know you well.

**Slide 35**

### Unit Three: A Plan for Growth

2. Drawing a Road Map of Growth

- Identify areas of challenges
  - Review the questionnaire results
  - What is the problem?
- Plot a Road Map of Change
  - What does the solution look like?
  - How do you envision your life (family, career, ministry) 6 months later? What are the things you would like to change? Can they be accomplished in 6 months?
  - What resources/abilities do you possess that can contribute to the solution?
  - Design a plan with progressive steps moving toward the solution

35

**Sub-unit Aim: To develop a simple strategy of growth with the understanding of my “Dark Side”.**

The facilitator can guide participants to revisit the results from their “dark side” questionnaires and identify the problems. If there are many problems, ask the individual to prioritize and select one or two most crucial problems to focus on.

In plotting a road map of change, the facilitator can guide the participants to take time to:

1. Think and imagine what the solution would look like in regards to the problems.
2. According to the following questions, list out such a solution in the areas of family life, career life, and ministry life:

What do you want to overcome?

Are these changes possible in a six months period?

What does it take to make it happen?

How would these areas of life look like six months from today?

Ask the participants to design their personal steps that can lead to such change.

**Slide 36**

### Unit Three: A Plan for Growth

- Checking the Plan
  - Are the steps:
    - Concrete?
    - Realistic?
    - Doable?
    - Measurable?
- Accountability
  - Who is your partner?
  - How do you define accountability of this plan?

36

The facilitator can ask the participants in their accountability group to check with each other whether their goals and steps are

Concrete

Realistic

Doable

Measurable

Also, ask each participant to write down his or her accountability partner's name and define the accountability relationship in terms of:

Frequency of each meeting

Method of encouragement

Format and focus of meetings

Means of evaluation

**Slide 37**

## **Unit Four: Acquiring Coping Skills**

### **Management Skills:**

What are the implications of Gal 5:2 and 5:6 in terms of healthy boundary?

- **Boundaries:**
  - Time
  - Emotional
  - Finances
  - Spiritual
- Think of the above areas and list out items you are dealing with which are within your boundary and the ones that are not.

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**Unit Aim: To develop necessary skills that would foster personal growth.**

**Sub-unit Aim: To understand the importance of setting healthy boundaries in personal life and in ministry.**

The implication of Gal 5:2 & 5:6 is that in some situations, the “burden” is more than one can handle and requires the mobilization and organization of the body of Christ to help out each other. An example of such situations will be in the event of an accident or medical emergency, a family is required to break from its normal routine to cope with the situation. At these moments, help and assistance are called for in order to fulfill the love that the law requires. However, each person also has his or her own responsibility to fulfill. For example, it is a parent’s duty to cultivate a healthy relationship with the children. This responsibility cannot be fulfilled by others. This is referred to in 5:6 as “portions.”

To distinguish the difference between the two is crucial because it will help us to define proper boundaries in different aspects of our lives. Proper definition and clarification of boundaries in time, in emotional involvement, in financial matters, and in spiritual responsibilities between oneself and others promote healthy and balanced life styles. At this point, the facilitator can lead a group discussion and guide the



participants at this point to think and reflect upon items and events in their current lives and see how they have or have not defined their boundaries.

**Slide 38**

### Unit Four: Acquiring Coping Skills

- Goal-Setting:
- What are your goals in:
  - Your career
  - Your family relationship
  - Your ministry
  - Your spiritual growth

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**Sub-unit Aim: To develop necessary managerial skills to maintain the boundaries the participants have set out.**

Some reminder about setting goals:

Goals need to be:

Tangible,

Measurable,

Doable,

Realistic.

An Example of an unclear goal: “To love the Lord deeper” is tangible, doable, and realistic but is not measurable. A better goal will be: To demonstrate my deeper love for the Lord, I will do daily devotions at least four times per week and at least twenty minutes each time. I will also try to pray for a brother in need for two weeks. I will direct at least one fourth of my prayers to worshipping and praising God rather than just interceding.

**Slide 39**

### Unit Four: Acquiring Coping Skills

- Resources management
  - Time
  - Emotion
  - Finances
  - Spiritual

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It would be helpful for the participant to list out the current resource he or she possesses:

1. Time: Is my use of time effective and efficient? Am I always in a hurry?
2. Emotion: Do I have any hurts, anger, unsolved conflicts? What are my unmet needs? Who is the one person in my life that would often support me emotionally when I experience hurts, anger... etc.? What is one positive coping skill I use when I face with stress in my life to help set me back in balance?
3. Finances: Are my finances balanced? Do I live in deficit? How much debt do I have?
4. Spiritual: Do I have stable devotion? Am I getting nurture in God's Word? What and when was my most recent experience of God's grace?

**Slide 40**

## Unit Four: Acquiring Coping Skills

- Accountability
  - Please define your accountability relationship in the following terms:
    - Frequency & time
    - Content & format
    - Means of evaluation of your plans

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Accountability is crucial in achieving a balanced life style. In this stage, the facilitator can ask the participants to clearly define their accountability partnership by answering the following questions and put the answers in writing:

1. How often should we meet? When is the mutually convenient time for us to meet?
2. What should our meeting look like? Draft a format together. For example:
  - A. Opening prayer, praise song, or thanksgiving
  - B. Sharing of recent struggle or breakthrough
  - C. Listening to feedback from the other partner
  - D. Word of encouragement
  - E. Intercessory prayers
3. How do we measure our progress?

This curriculum is designed to assist a small group leader by firstly analyze his or her “dark side” in order to uncover the fundamental needs of the person. These needs can be addressed by cultivating a set of Biblical attitudes as outlined in Unit Two.

When developed, these attitudes would foster a better understanding of God’s grace and enable the small group leader to apply it in his or her personal life. Equipped with a renewed understanding of oneself and God’s grace, a small group leader can develop a strategy of personal growth by accessing his or her strengths and resources and acquire necessary managerial skills.

Healthy ministry is the result of healthy leadership; therefore, the spiritual and emotional health of a small group leader is crucial to the success of his or her small group. Our ministry often reflects the status of our hearts. Small group ministry can benefit from the well-balanced and godly life of the small group leader. The Book of Proverbs put it wisely in the following verses:

My son, pay attention to what I say; listen closely to my words.  
Do not let them out of your sight; keep them within your heart;  
for they are life to those who find them and health to a man’s whole body.  
Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

(Proverbs 4: 20-22)

## CHAPTER FIVE

### OUTCOMES

The task of a small group leader can be daunting. As one of the numerous training manuals available in the market puts it, the role of a small group leader is multifaceted: he is a shepherd, providing pastoral care for the group members; a manager, putting the operation in place and empowering the group members to execute; and at the same time, a leader, allying and rallying the group members to pursue a vision.<sup>39</sup> It is not difficult to imagine that the burden and stress of such a task would easily throw a person off balance in his or her daily life. The job of a small group leader could be overwhelming.

With the need to manage the above mentioned aspects of the group life, leading a small group, from another perspective, is like walking a tightrope.<sup>40</sup> A small group leader is required to constantly balance the dynamic tensions among different people and issues. Some situations require the leader to exercise grace to affirm the bereaved while other situations call for the leader to speak the truth in order to bring correction and guidance to a member. Some in the group respond well to care, yet others may need discipleship to mature. The variety of situations posts a tremendous challenge to a small group leader. A small group leader could easily find himself or herself in a dilemma of handling different tensions.

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<sup>39</sup>Swee Geok Ong and Meow Kiat Wong compiled, *Cell Leader Intern Trainin: Trainee's Manual* (Singapore: Touch Ministries International Ptd. Ltd. 1996), Lesson 8-1.

<sup>40</sup> As described in: Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *Walking the Small Group Tightrope* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 2003).

These factors could act as stressors in the life of a small group leader. Therefore, it is crucial for a small group leader to understand his or her priority from a Biblical perspective and to develop proper balance in his or her life. It is important for a small group leader to know that he or she is “not the group, nor does all that happens in the group rest on [his or her] shoulders.”<sup>41</sup> A small group leader ought not to confuse his or her role. A small group leader is merely a gardener who provides the place and proper ingredients for the growth of his or her members to occur. The Apostle Paul stated in 1 Cor. 3: 5-8:

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe--- as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

Furthermore, the primary responsibility of a small group leader is to maintain the balance in his or her life. Without this balance, it would be impossible for a small group leader to provide healthy care and service to the group. Without a healthy servant, there will be no healthy ministry. We have argued this point in Chapter Two and Chapter Three of this thesis project. With reflective effort of recognizing the deficiencies and dysfunctions in one’s life, a foundation based upon Biblical values emerges while a small group leader cultivates certain healthy attitudes in relation to himself or herself. These healthy attitudes, described in detail in Chapter Three and

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<sup>41</sup> Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *Making Small Groups Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 143.

implemented in Chapter Four's curriculum (Unit Two), represent an expression of grace in the personal life of a small group leader. Christian salvation communicates to us that God loves and accepts us as sinners. God loves us so much that He does not want us to remain who we are but instead, to transform us into His holiness and likeness. It is from this foundation that one could minister to the people whom God has entrusted to him or her with joy and freedom. The outcome of this thesis project, *A Curriculum of Preventive Self-care for Small Group Leaders*, is to foster a personal journey of self-discovery and growth in the small group ministry context. It is the expectation of the curriculum that a small group leader, by navigating through the curriculum, can develop the awareness of his or her personal balance and realize the fullness of God's grace in ministry.

### **Suggestion for Further Study**

The life of a small group leader is complicated. Although a balanced life style proves to be essential to the health of a small group leader's ministry, other aspects of small group ministry also have significant impact on a small group leader's well-being. For example, the ability to manage group dynamics is important. Failure or incompetence in this area may deeply frustrate a group leader. Cloud & Townsend have pointed out that one of the most important responsibilities of a group leader is to

balance the three dynamic elements that are essential for a small group's spiritual growth: grace, truth, and time.<sup>42</sup> Grace, defined as unmerited favors, is needed when failure occurs, while truth is required for correction of sinful behaviors. A small group leader is expected to demonstrate and facilitate both at the same time. Time is a necessary ingredient for both grace and truth to take root in members' lives. This process can give tremendous stress to the group leaders.

Tensions always present in a small group. Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson in *Walking the Small Group Tightrope* framed small group ministry in term of "polarity management".<sup>43</sup> They argued that small group ministry is a ministry that requires constant management of polarized conditions. These polarized conditions are: truth and life, care and discipleship, friendship and accountability, kindness and confrontation, task and people, openness and intimacy. The job of a small group leader is not to resolve these irresolvable polarized conditions but to manage them so that both kinds of conditions may have a balanced manifestation in the group dynamics. Through this process, the group can reap the benefits of both kinds of conditions.<sup>44</sup> In this respect, a small group leader's well-being not only relies upon his or her own balance, but it may also lie in his or her ability to manage these tensions so that these tensions will not become his or her stressors. Further study in this area of group

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 41-55, 143-145.

<sup>43</sup> Bill Donahue and Russ Robinson, *Walking the Small Group Tightrope* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 20.



dynamics and tensions may help a small group leader to develop adequate management skills that in turn will contribute to his or her balance.

Reasons for small group leaders' burnout can be complicated. This thesis project seeks to address the issue of a lost of balance in a small group leader's personal life that can be managed and controlled with adequate knowledge and actions. It is preventive in nature. However, there may be other factors which contribute to the stress and may result in burnout. For example, the lack of direction and focus of small group ministry from the local church can hinder the effectiveness of a small group leader. Conflict resolution skills can also provide a small group leader with useful tools and confidence in handling interpersonal conflicts among group members. Possession of such skills is valuable and would also reduce the stress factors in a small group leader's ministry. Although these factors are not within the scope of this thesis project, further study in these areas will yield valuable contributions to the overall health of a small group leader.

This curriculum could have incorporated solitude prayers as one of the aspects of preventive self-care. With all the skills and preventive measure in place, one cannot replace them with the importance of prayer. This is one of the most fundamental aspects of ministry. In prayer, we can reflect upon ourselves, pour out our emotion in the presence of the Lord, and ultimately be transformed by the Lord. Nevertheless,

our approach is to integrate the self-care skills with the ministry skills needed in the context of the small group ministry. Therefore, it is reasonable to anticipate future studies to address the prevention of ministry burnout from the perspective of prayer of the small group leader.

## **Conclusion**

However daunting the task of a small group leader is, there is nothing that can obstruct the sovereignty of God in molding His children; sometimes this may mean frustration and disappointment in ministry. There may be situations in which the Lord uses burnout to refine a person and to bring redemptive results to a person. However, those are exceptions and rare in nature. We cannot totally prevent burnout, but we can try our best to prevent unedifying burnout experiences which result from the negligence of our own balance. We can, at the very least, identify and remove the conditions that can lead to such devastating results.

The Cases of Leroy, Harvey, and Jane as described in Chapter One are not uncommon among today's church. I wrote this thesis because of their stories--- and many others like them. I am concerned about the morale and survival of those in the Christian ministry, especially the small group leaders. They often face significant feelings of failure, disappointment, and exhaustion. The remedy lies in the notion of

God's grace. We may understand the concept of grace on the cognitive level in Biblical studies and in theology, but it is far more challenging to minister grace first to ourselves, then to others whom we strive to serve. My hope is that this curriculum will serve as a vehicle to liberate a small group leader from the anxiety of performance and the burden to succeed, and instead, to serve others from the overflow of God's grace in his or her life.

## APPENDIX

### Inventory for the Five Dysfunctional Leadership Styles

Adopted from Gary McIntosh & Samuel D. Rima, Sr. *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997.

#### THE COMPULSIVE LEADER

##### *APPLYING INSIGHTS*

How do you know if you are or share some traits of a compulsive leader? To help you understand if this is the shape your dark side has taken, we offer the following inventory. Read each statement and circle the number that corresponds closest to your impressions about yourself.

- 5 = strongly agree
- 4 = agree
- 3 = uncertain
- 2 = disagree
- 1 = strongly disagree

1.	I often worry that my superiors do not approve of the quality of my work.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	I am highly regimented in my daily personal routines such as exercise schedule or devotions.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	When circumstances dictate that I must interrupt my daily personal routines, I find myself out of sorts and feeling guilty for having “skipped” a day.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	I frequently find myself conscious of my status in relationship to others.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	It is difficult for me to take an unplanned day off from work responsibilities just to goof around or spend time with friends or family.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	While away from work, I still find myself thinking about work-related topics, often sitting down to write out my ideas in length even if it disrupts family activities.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	I like to plan the details of my vacations so that I don’t waste time.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	I often explode in anger after being cut off or irritated while driving or over petty issues.	1 2 3 4 5

9.	I am meticulous with my personal appearance, keeping shoes shined, clothes perfectly pressed, hair carefully cut and groomed, and finger-nails always clipped.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	I frequently comment about the long hours I keep and my heavy workload.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	When others make sloppy errors or pay little attention to detail, I become annoyed and judge that person.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	I am obsessive about the smallest errors, worrying that they will reflect poorly on me.	1 2 3 4 5

Add up the circled numbers and place the total here:

\_\_\_\_\_

If your total comes to less than 20, you probably are not compulsive. If your total is between 21 and 40, there is likelihood that you have *some* compulsive tendencies. If your total is 41 or more, you probably are a compulsive leader.

Do you see the traits of a compulsive leader in yourself?

In what ways does this type of leader mirror your dark side?

## THE NARCISSISTIC LEADER

### *APPLYING INSIGHTS*

How do you know if you are narcissistic when it comes to the exercise of leadership? One of the traits of narcissistic leaders is that they live in a state of constant denial and self-justification. Therefore, the following inventory may be helpful.

5 = strongly agree  
 4 = agree  
 3 = uncertain  
 2 = disagree  
 1 = strongly disagree

1.	Fellow leaders in my church or organization frequently question whether my proposed goals and projects are feasible and realistic.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	I am obsessed with knowing how others feel about my sermons, lessons, and performance.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	I find it difficult to receive criticism of any kind, reacting with anger, anxiety, or even depression when it does come.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	At times I find myself thinking, <i>I'll show them; they could never make it without me</i> , when I experience conflict situations or opposition to my proposed plans.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	In spite of achieving what others would consider significant success, I still find myself dissatisfied and driven to achieve greater things in an effort to feel good about myself.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	I am willing to bend rules and press the envelope of acceptable behavior to accomplish my goals.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	I find myself feeling jealous of the success and achievements of associates, other churches, or organizations in my area.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	I am often unaware of or unconcerned about the financial pressures my goals and projects place on those I lead or the church or organization I serve.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	Success or failure in a project has a direct bearing on my self-image and sense of worth.	1 2 3 4 5

10.	I am highly conscious of how colleagues and those to whom I am accountable regard my accomplishments.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	I need to be recognized or “on top” when meeting with a group of fellow pastors, denominational officials, or associates.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	I see myself as a nationally known figure at some time in the future or I have plans to attain such a position.	1 2 3 4 5

Add up the circled numbers and place the total here:

\_\_\_\_\_

If your total comes to less than 20, you probably are not narcissistic. If your total is between 21 and 40, there is likelihood that you have *some* narcissistic tendencies. If your total is 41 or more, you probably are a narcissistic leader.

Do you see the traits of a narcissistic leader in yourself?

In what ways does this type of leader mirror your dark side?

## THE PARANOID LEADER

### *APPLYING INSIGHTS*

Do you wonder if you are or share some traits of a paranoid leader?  
If so, the following inventory may provide you with some insight.

Read each statement and circle the number that corresponds closest to your impressions about yourself.

5 = strongly agree  
4 = agree  
3 = uncertain  
2 = disagree  
1 = strongly disagree

1.	When I see two key church leaders discreetly talking in the lobby of the church, I worry that they may be talking about me.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	It really bothers me to think about my church's board meeting without me being present.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	When an associate receives rave reviews for a sermon or some special ministry, I experience intense feelings of jealousy rather than joy in the success and recognition he or she is receiving.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	I require subordinates and associates to provide me with detailed reports of their activities.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	I struggle when an associate, rather than me, is asked by church members to perform services such as weddings or funerals.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	I have few intimate or meaningful relationships within my church or organization and find myself avoiding such relationships.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	I insist on absolute loyalty from those who work for me and prohibit staff from criticizing me in any way.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	I often worry that there is a significant faction within my organization that would like to see me leave.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	I have probed people for what they know or for special information they may have relating to certain leaders in my organization.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	Those I work with often complain about my lack of a healthy sense of humor.	1 2 3 4 5



11.	I routinely refer to those I lead as “my people”, ”my board”, or “my church”, while bristling when the same designation is spoken by an associate.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	I tend to take seriously even lighthearted comments and jokes directed at me.	1 2 3 4 5

Add up the circled numbers and place the total here:

\_\_\_\_\_

If your total comes to less than 20, you probably are not paranoid. If your total is between 21 and 40, there is likelihood that you have *some* paranoid tendencies. If your total is 41 or more, you probably are a paranoid leader.

Do you see the traits of a paranoid leader in yourself?

In what ways does this type of leader mirror your dark side?

## THE CODEPENDENT LEADER

### *APPLYING INSIGHTS*

How do you determine if you are or share some traits of codependent in the exercise of your leadership? In an effort to provide more specific help, the following inventory is offered for your own personal assessment.

Read the following statements, circling the number that corresponds closest to your impressions about yourself.

- 5 = strongly agree
- 4 = agree
- 3 = uncertain
- 2 = disagree
- 1 = strongly disagree

1.	I grew up in a family with one or more chemically dependent people (i.e., alcoholics, drug addicts, etc.).	1 2 3 4 5
2.	I grew up in a strict, legalistic religious environment that held its members to an unrealistic standard of behavior and discouraged open communication about personal struggles and problems.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	I am usually willing to put up with the bizarre or embarrassing behavior of others.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	I often refrain from sharing my opinion in a group setting until I have heard the opinions of the others in the group.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	I frequently worry about hurting people's feelings by sharing my true feelings.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	I often feel responsible for problems I did not create.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	I find it difficult to sleep because I worry about someone else's problems or behavior.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	I find myself frequently overcommitted and feel my life is out of control.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	I find it extremely difficult to say no to people even when I know that saying yes will result in difficulty for me or my family.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	I constantly feel a sense of guilt but have difficulty identifying its source.	1 2 3 4 5

11.	I feel like I never measure up to those around me and have self-deprecating thoughts.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	When I receive compliments from others, I find it difficult to simply accept them without making qualifying statements.	1 2 3 4 5

Add up the circled numbers and place the total here:

\_\_\_\_\_

If your total comes to less than 20, you probably are not codependent. If your total is between 21 and 40, there is likelihood that you have *some* codependent tendencies. If your total is 41 or more, you probably are a codependent leader.

Do you see the traits of a codependent leader in yourself?

In what ways does this type of leader mirror your dark side?

## THE PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE LEADER

### *APPLYING INSIGHTS*

How do you know if you are or share some traits of a passive-aggressive leader? The following inventory is intended to help you begin answering that question.

Read the following statements, circling the number that corresponds closest to your impressions about yourself.

- 5 = strongly agree
- 4 = agree
- 3 = uncertain
- 2 = disagree
- 1 = strongly disagree

1.	I find myself resisting standards and procedures for formal review of my performance.	1 2 3 4 5
2.	It is common for me to procrastinate on major projects.	1 2 3 4 5
3.	I regularly resist others' ideas that could translate into increased performance or responsibilities for myself.	1 2 3 4 5
4.	I find myself consistently under-performing.	1 2 3 4 5
5.	I experience periodic but regular outbursts of anger and frustration that are just within the bounds of what is considered acceptable behavior.	1 2 3 4 5
6.	Occasionally I intentionally forget suggested projects.	1 2 3 4 5
7.	Sometimes I give others the silent treatment as an expression of my anger.	1 2 3 4 5
8.	I find myself telling others that nothing is bothering me when in reality I am seething.	1 2 3 4 5
9.	I tend to be generally pessimistic and feel negative about my future.	1 2 3 4 5
10.	Others have expressed to me that I make them feel uncomfortable.	1 2 3 4 5
11.	Strategic planning and goal-setting are difficult for me.	1 2 3 4 5
12.	Sometimes I catch myself trying to manipulate others in	

	group settings by venting my anger and emotions when facing an initiative or idea I do not support.	1 2 3 4 5
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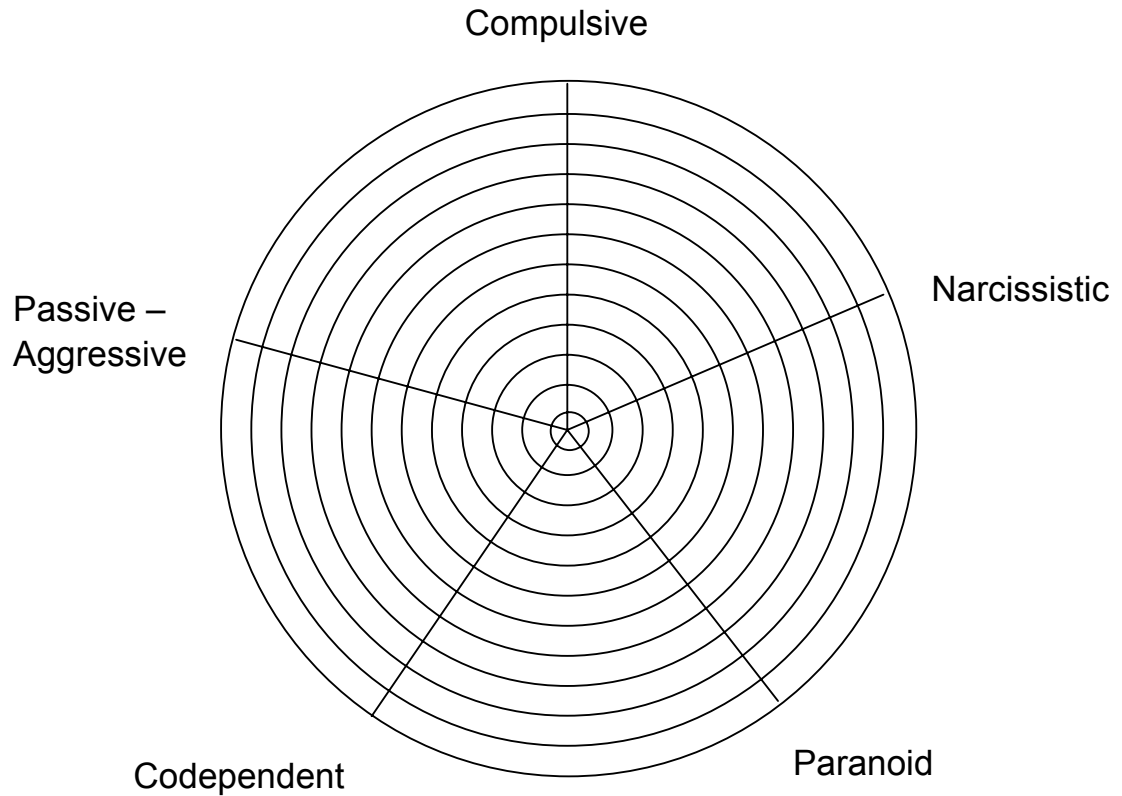
Add up the circled numbers and place the total here:

\_\_\_\_\_

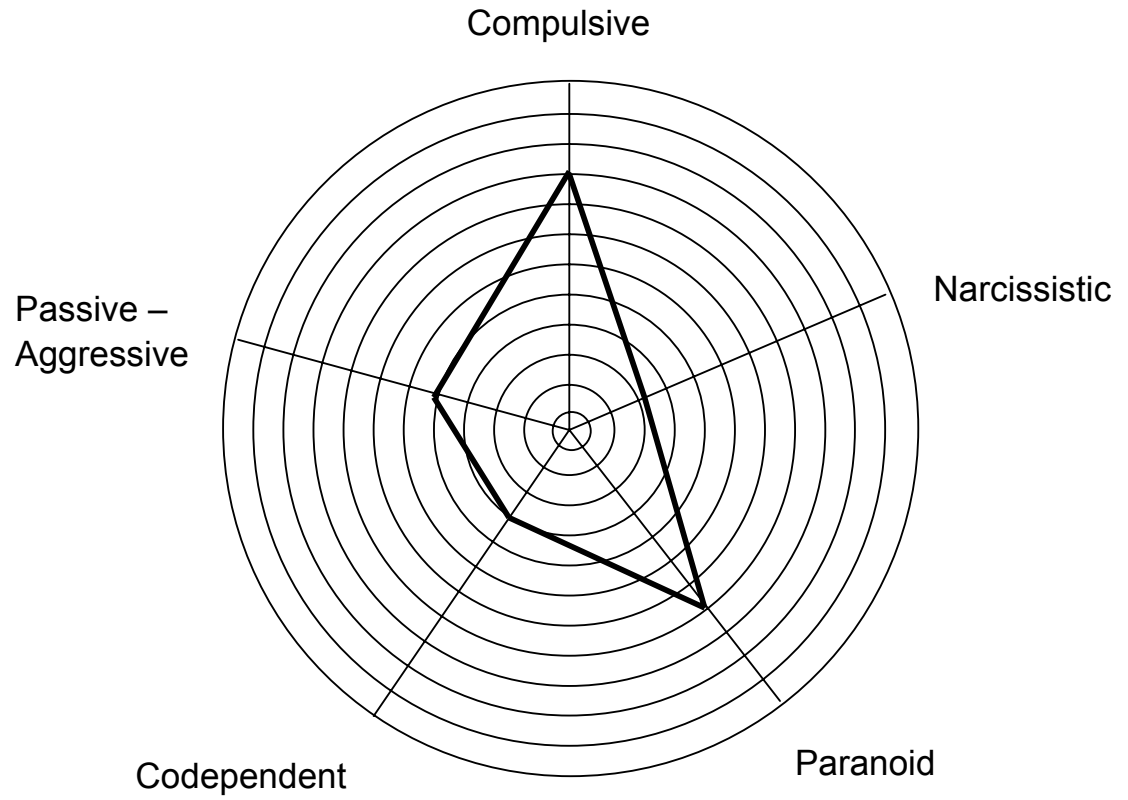
If your total comes to less than 20, you probably are not passive-aggressive. If your total is between 21 and 40, there is likelihood that you have *some* passive-aggressive tendencies. If your total is 41 or more, you probably are a passive-aggressive leader.

Do you see the traits of a passive-aggressive leader in yourself?

In what ways does this type of leader mirror your dark side?



**Instruction:** Many people are a combination of the types in this inventory. Some types may have stronger impact on a person's leadership style while other types play minor roles. For each inventory type, take the number you entered as total and plot that number on the above graph by starting at the center of the circle and moving toward the outside edge. Note that each circle represents 5 points, counting from the center outward. In other word, the most inner circle is 5 points and the most outer circle is 60 points. After plotting the five styles, connect the dots and you will see a shape that represents your potential leadership dysfunctions.



An example of a leadership shape in relation to the five types of dysfunction.

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## VITA

Chung-Pui Wilson Chang was born in Hong Kong. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology and Archaeology from National Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan in 1982 and his Master of Arts and Master of Education degrees from Teachers College, Columbia University in 1988. Wilson also received his Doctor of Ministry degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 2007. Prior to his dedication to full-time ministry, Wilson worked as a Junior High school teacher in New York City from 1988 to 1997. He received his Master of Divinity degree from China Evangelical Seminary, Taipei, Taiwan in 2000. He serves on the pastoral staff at Rutgers Community Christian Church of Somerset, New Jersey since 2000. Most of his energy and time are devoted to training small group leaders and pastoral counseling and caring.

While attending seminary in Taiwan, Wilson owes much of his experience and learning about small group ministry during his three-year internship in a growing and exuberant cell church in Taipei City. A father of three children, Wilson loves hiking, art, and reading. He is currently Acting Pastor of English Ministry at Rutgers Community Christian Church.